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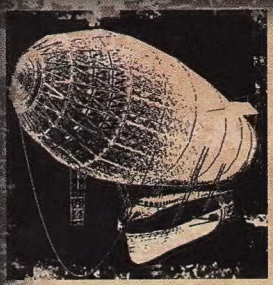

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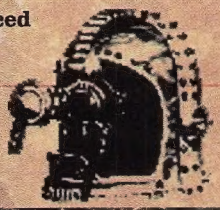

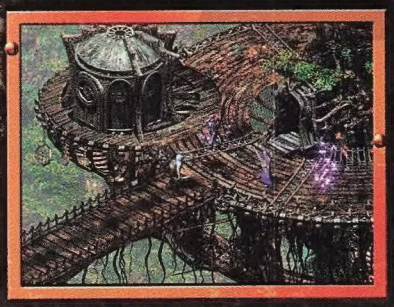

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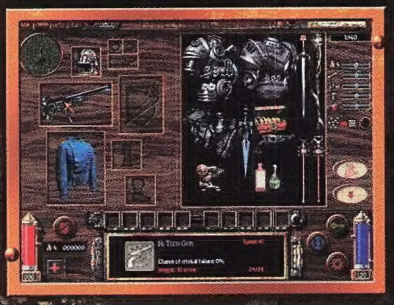

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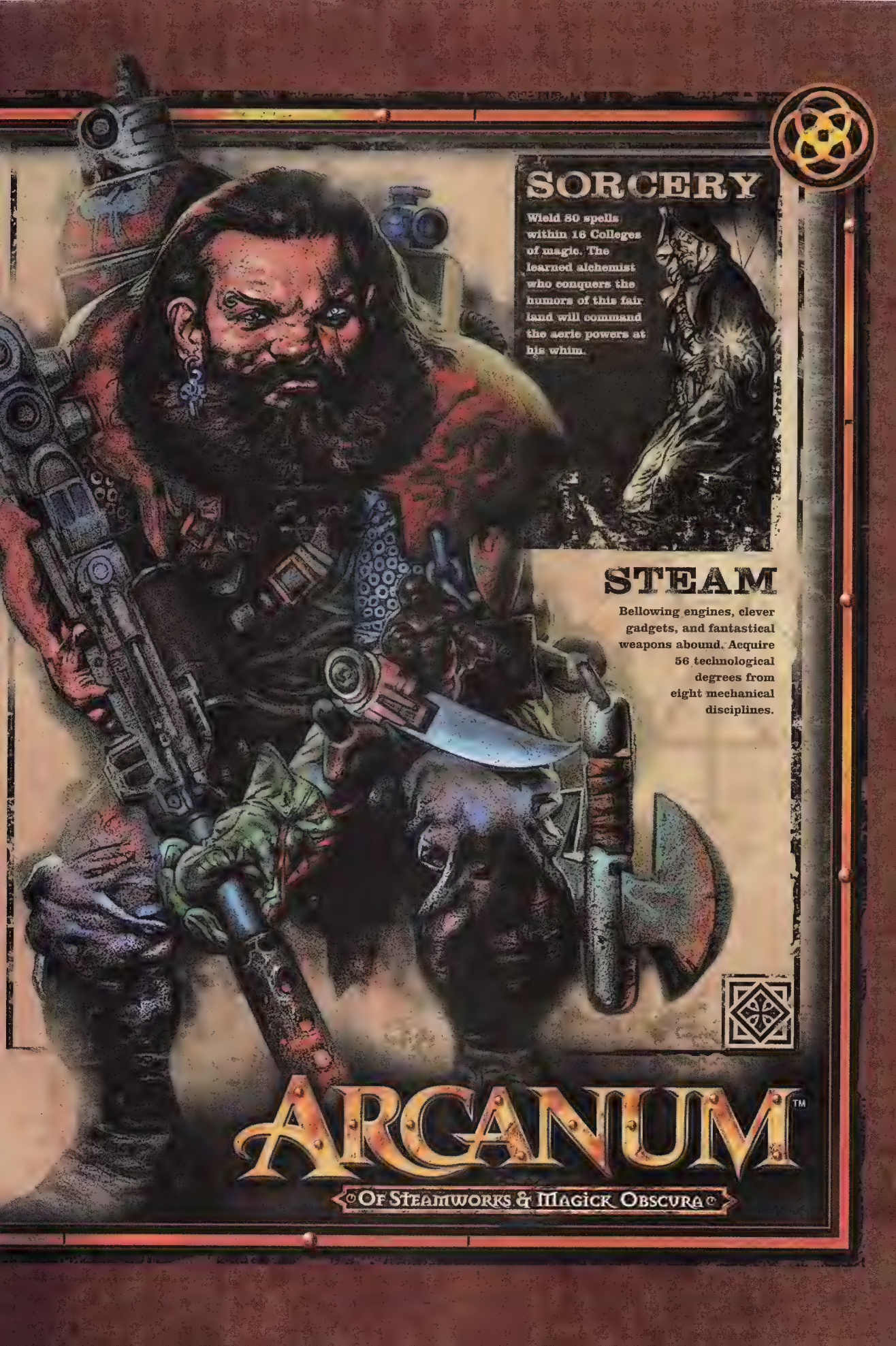
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WIZARD contents

THE COMICS MAGAZINE • NUMBER 105 • JUNE 2000

X MARKS THE SPOT

You don't need to have Wolverine's keen senses to smell the "X-Men" movie coming your way! Want to know the full scoop on the movie, straight from the director and stars? Then jet on over **to page 78** for an awesome X-Men Q & A! And remember, the film opens nationwide July 14. Don't make any plans!

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THE GREATEST ISSUE EVER

ON THE COVERS

The **Punisher/Daredevil** cover (right) was drawn by Steve Dillon and colored by Liquid! Graphics. For the 411 on the Punisher, the character making comics' greatest comeback, flip on over to **page 44**. Wanna know the hidden *Wizard* staffer who's behind the UPC code on our **Greatest Issue Ever** cover (left)? Log on over to **www.wizardworld.com** to find out! (Hey, corporate synergy–awesome!)

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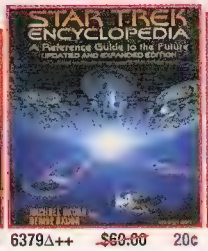

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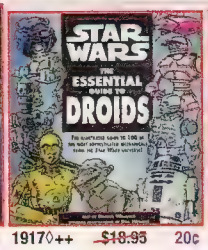

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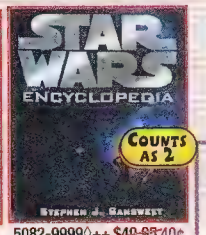

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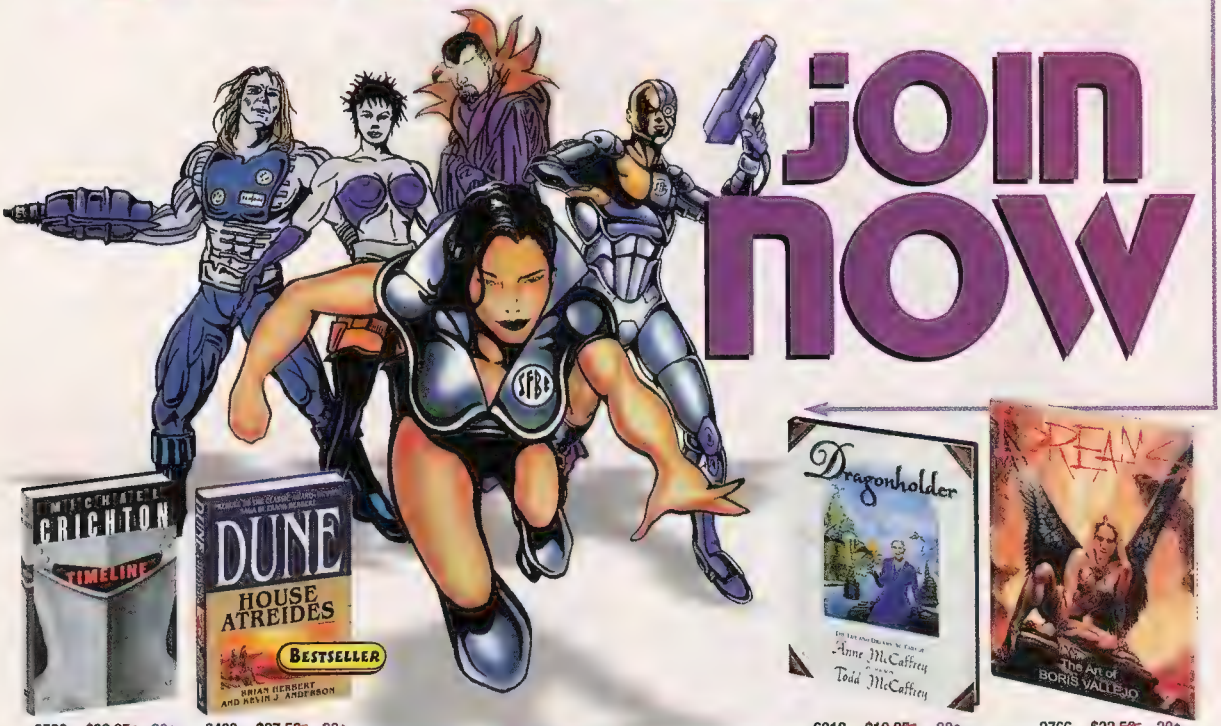

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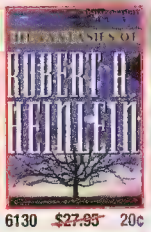

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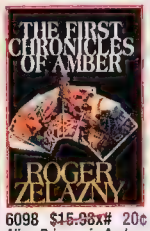

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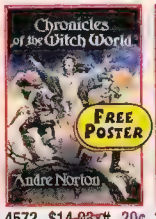

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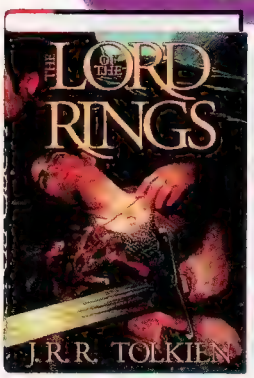

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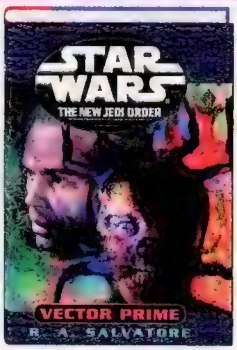

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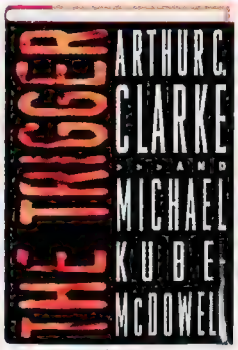

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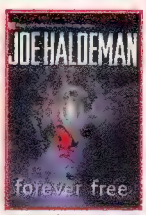

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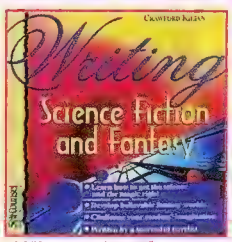

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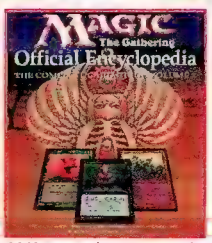

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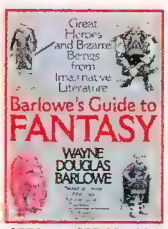

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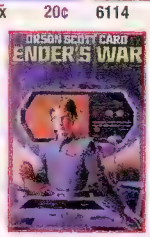

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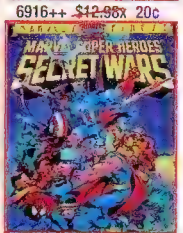

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ABC AUDITED

Chronicles #1 By Ron Marz with Barbara Kesel, Claudio Castellini & Mike Atiyeh

CrossGen's long-awaited debut is an extra-sized issue with both a complete, self-contained 32-page story, and glimpses into the four monthly titles coming in June! Be there for the introduction of the First, twin houses of god-like characters who have long enjoyed their position of superiority. But now their foundations have been shaken by the sudden appearance of upstarts who are graced with mysterious marks of power. The First must decide how to deal with the danger posed by these Sigil-Bearers, whose existence threatens to end their dominance forever!

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MAGIC WORDS

THESE LETTERS ARE NOT TO BE USED AS A LIFE-SAVING DEVICE

'PREACHER': GOOD OR EVIL?... SUE KURT BUSIEK'S BEHIND... AND MEXICAN SPIDER-CLONES!

It's nice to be back.

After a one-month...uh...let's just call it a "sabbatical" in a Mexican prison, I have returned to the sweeping vista we all call "Magic Words." Long story short: The Bunny, who was supposed to bail me out after I was unjustly jailed for smuggling underage llamas across the border, "intercepted" my bail money. He finally busted me outta the joint when he ran out of pesos and tequila.

In the meantime, geez—looks like everybody done got serious on me! So this month, we'll tackle letters on religion, literary symbolism, art specifications and the meaning of lunch in today's society. Enjoy.

Dear Jim,

In 1995, when a comic called *Preacher* debuted, I predicted it wouldn't last. With anti-clerical writer Garth Ennis at the helm combined with the book's title, it seemed to be on the path to commercial failure.

Instead, it became the Vertigo line's most popular title. Not only that, but it became a favorite of the mainstream comic book industry's best writers. Mark Waid, Kurt Busiek and Grant Morrison have repeatedly raved about this insult to religion. Heck, even Jim McLauchlin, a Roman Catholic, has mentioned that he enjoys *Preacher*. What the heck is going on? A comic which is just an excuse to bash God and religion has won the approval of comics' best and brightest? Are comics' top writers nothing more than a bunch of anti-Christian church haters? If so, this industry is in worse shape than I thought.

I realize that you won't print this letter, as it attacks your beloved *Preacher*. Still, I thought I'd make known my thoughts on this matter.

Francis A. Rodriguez
doctorunknown@hotmail.com

Ah, the old, "You won't print this letter" gambit.

Well, I'm not exactly what you'd call a practicing Catholic. But all religious preference considerations aside, I do enjoy *Preacher*, just 'cause I find it a gripping story with fascinating characters. And a few of the "best and brightest" you mentioned tend to agree.

"If *Preacher* was 'just an excuse to bash God and religion,' I doubt I'd be interested in it," says Kurt Busiek. "But that's not what I see in it. For me, the grotesque supporting characters and scabrous humor aren't even the main appeal, though they make mighty fine frosting on the cake. I think it's a terrific adventure story about a man of conviction on the road to doing what his sense of right and wrong tell him has to be done. Not to mention the beautiful art, or the fact that Garth has one of the best senses of pacing I've seen in comics in years."

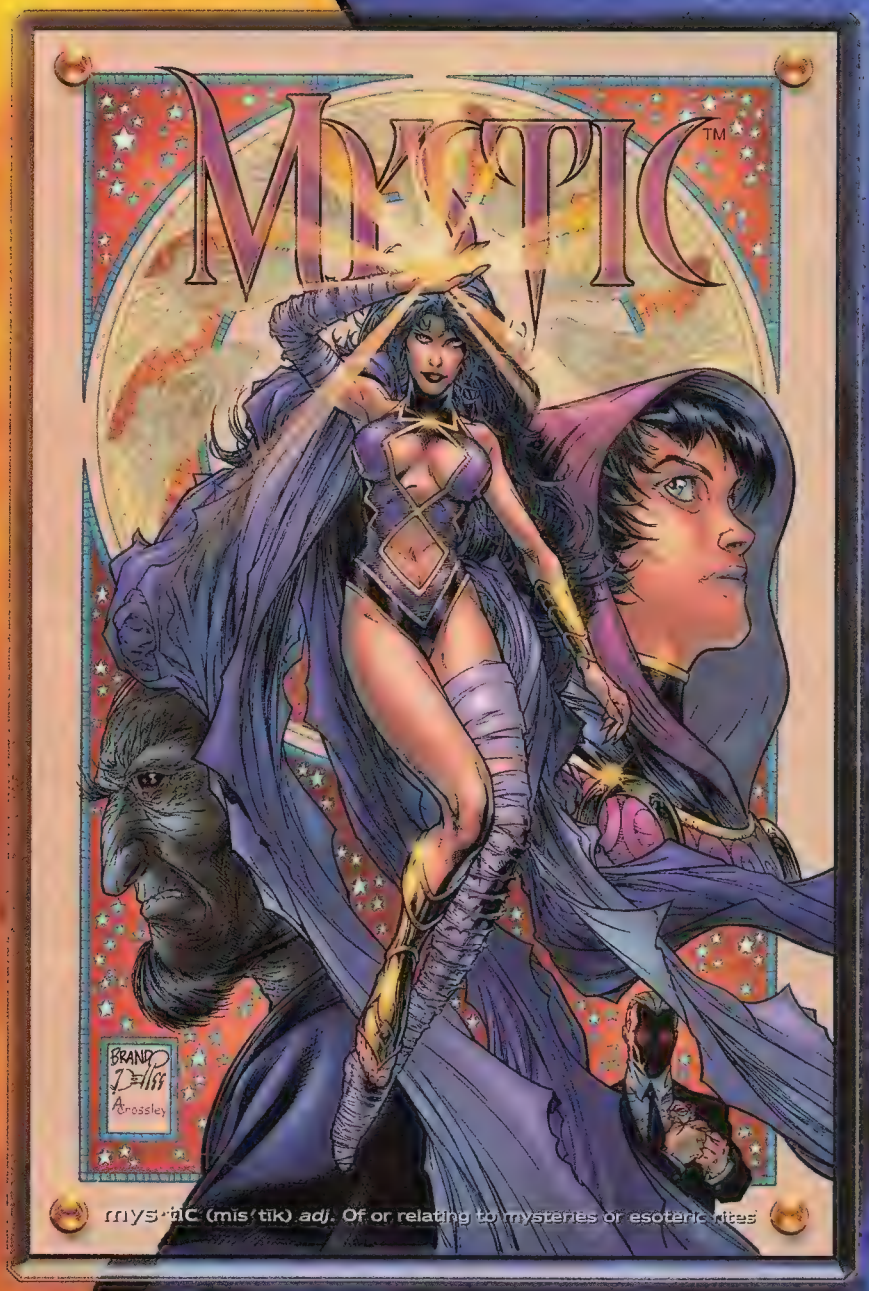
Grant Morrison concurs. "I don't read *Preacher* for the grade-school theology," he says, "but for Garth's brilliance with characterization, storytelling, pacing and dialogue. Garth's work teaches me new things about how to write comics, and makes me laugh deep down in my black heart. I read it because it's an unquestioned masterpiece by one of our field's finest, most intelligent and most distinctive authors."

Morrison also offers a suggestion: "If you don't like *Preacher* or Garth's stand on religion, Francis, you know what to do: *Forgive him* and get on with your life."

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADLE

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"THERE, THAT WAS THE LAST OF THE GATES. ALL ENTRANCES AND EXITS ARE SEALED. HELL IS CLOSED."
—LUCIFER MORNINGSTAR, AFTER FREEING HELL'S INHABITANTS AND GIVING UP HIS JOB TO WALK THE MORTAL EARTH, SANDMAN *#23*



Mystic #1 By Ron Marz, Brandon Peterson, John Dell & Andrew Crossley

Magic is a way of life on Giselle's world, but she's a woman far more interested in the party life. All that changes when she's granted the sigil, an inexplicable mark bringing her untold magical might. But not only doesn't she know what to do with the power, she doesn't even want it! Combining the talents of Ron Marz (Green Lantern), Brandon Peterson (X-Men) and John Dell (JLA) in CrossGen's first monthly title, MYSTIC will be pure magic.

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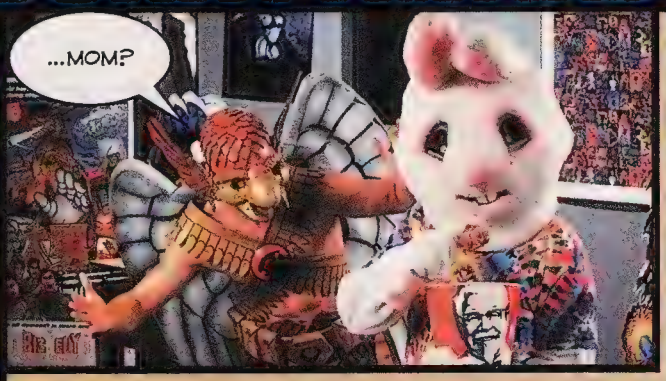
LETTER OF THE MONTH



Jim takes his favorite letter and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this, nor is there a prize. You can now e-mail The Bunny at bunnywiz1@aol.com!

Dear Mr. Jimmy McWhatever,

Can I sue Kurt Busiek for using my name on his latest creator-owned property without my permission? I see the main character in *Shockrockets* is named "Alejandro Cruz."

Alex (Alejandro) Cruz
plasmatica69@hotmail.com

How would I know? When ex-girlfriends and bail bondsmen come knockin', I go straight to a real lawyer with a three-piece suit and everything. Eugene Chay, Esq., of Philadelphia's Mesirov, Gelman, Jaffe, Cramer and Jamieson is one such lawyer. Eugene say:

"Can you *successfully* sue Kurt? The short answer: No.

"Inside, next to the copyright information, is a disclaimer that notes *Shockrockets* is a work of fiction, and any similarities to real persons are purely coincidental. Right there is Kurt's number one defense.

"Second, no one has copyright or trademark interests in their name, unless your name happens to be 'Trump' or 'Jordan.' So there's no intellectual property issue here.

"I'm also assuming that Kurt simply doesn't know who you are, Alex. Heck, Kurt has no idea who I am, and I shook his hand and introduced myself at the San Diego con last year.

"Now, you *can* still sue Kurt. You'll just get your case thrown out by a judge and probably face a penalty for abuse of civil process. I don't recommend it because it's no fun to have a judge call you names, then slap you with a fine. But hey—a fanboy's got to do something to get his kicks."

And it probably beats another night of "X-Files" reruns.

A sentiment perhaps summed up best by the simple comment of another man you mentioned, Mr. Mark Waid: "Judge not lest ye be judged."

Dear Jim McLauchlin,

I am, as are many fans of comic literature, a huge fan of *Watchmen*. I know writer Alan Moore likes to read books of the non-comic variety, and an idea hit me the other day:

In *Watchmen*, a cab driver says she is going to a concert performed by a group called Pale Horse. There is a novel titled *Behold the Pale Horse* which deals with a lot of the conspiracy themes *Watchmen* has in its plot. I was wondering if the name of the band comes from this book.

Or does it perhaps come from Death, the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse, as found in the book of Revelations of the Bible? Death is said to be riding a "pale horse" in that description.

I know Alan Moore doesn't like to talk about *Watchmen*, but I would like to know about some of the thought that went into this masterpiece.

Dan Morris
Charlotte, NC

The thick-bearded *über*-writer known as Alan Moore says, "It's the latter, the description of Death riding a pale horse. I've never heard of the other book, but I would presume Revelations is where the title of that may come from, too."

And actually, even 14 years after the fact, Moore doesn't mind talking about *Watchmen*. "I suppose it's nice people are still interested in it. It's so distant for me now that my enthusiasm for the project may be a bit blunted, but I suppose there's always someone who's just read it. It's nice to see that new readers think of it fondly, I should suppose."

And a lot of new readers there are. The *Watchmen* graphic novel has sold over one million copies worldwide.

Jim,

As a longtime comic fan, I am interested to know what some of our favorite comic book creators are doing these days. Whatever happened to Keith Giffen, Marv Wolfman and Bill Mantlo? Are they planning to work on any comic projects in the future?

Sanjiv Purba
Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

The ever-wacky Keith Giffen is currently adapting the Bible in, of all places, *Penthouse* magazine. Can't wait for the "Sodom and Gomorrah" chapter.

Marv Wolfman, who built a name for himself writing *The New Teen Titans* for DC Comics in the '80s, is writing *Silver Age: Teen Titans #1*, part of a May DC crossover. "I would love to do more," Wolfman says. "But that's up to the editors, isn't it?"

The news is sad on Bill Mantlo. The former *Incredible Hulk* and *Micronauts* writer was struck by a car several years ago while Rollerblading. He suffered serious brain damage, and a recovery seems unlikely. Bill's family now takes care of him, and encourages well-wishers to send get-well cards to: The Mantlo Family, 1995 Miller Place, Merrick, N.Y. 11566.

"I read every card and letter to him," says brother Mike Mantlo. "When he's in the right mood, he'll respond. And that's great."

Jim,

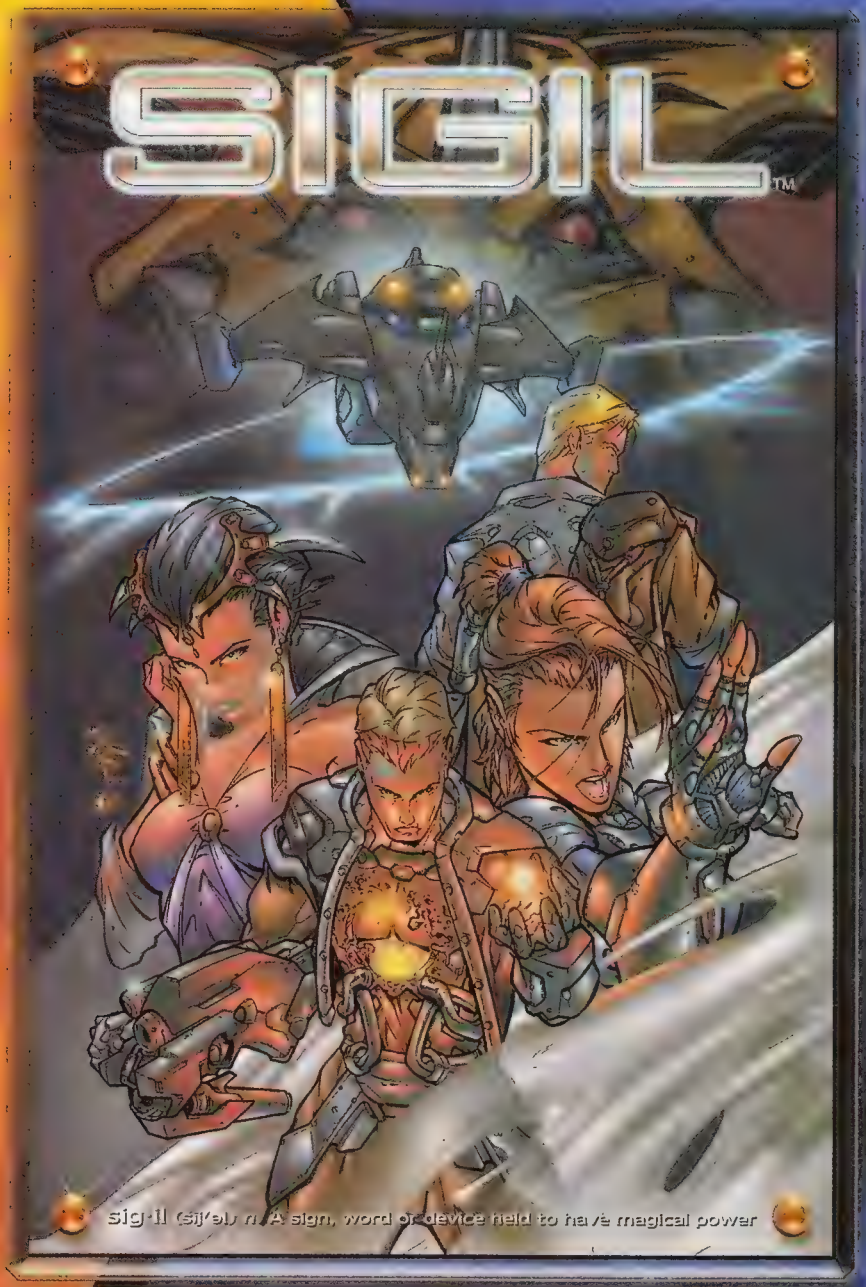
I've been wondering what Trent Kanigua has been up to. I haven't seen *CreeD* in ages.

Tyrell Cannon
Rocky Ford, CO

THE BUNNY PHOTO BY PAUL SCARDALE

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"DAREDEVIL. OKAY? I SAID IT. I SAID THE NAME. AND HE'S GOT ANOTHER NAME. AND IT'S WRITTEN DOWN RIGHT HERE. YOU WANT IT OR NOT?"
—NO-GOOD JUNKIE KAREN PAGE, SELLING DAREDEVIL'S SECRET IDENTITY TO ONE OF KINGPIN'S THUGS FOR HEROIN, DAREDEVIL *#226*



Sigil #1 By Barbara Kesel, Ben Lai, Ray Lai & Wil Quintana

Sam's just trying to make a buck in a cash-strapped world when he's slapped with the sigil and finds himself triggering the biggest explosion ever to hit the worlds of the Planetary Union. There's a new weapon...him! Now all he has to do is avoid all the people who want to get their hands on it. He's got the power, but his best friend pays the price. Futuristic space action by Barbara Kesel, Ben and Ray Lai, and Wil Quintana.

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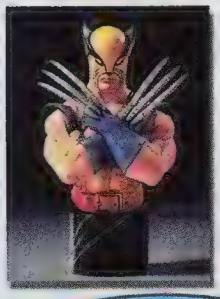
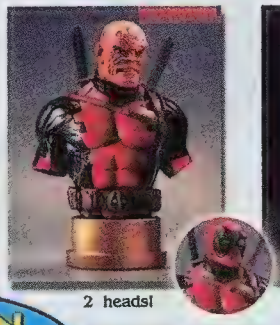


Deadpool



2 heads!

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also working on a children's book with former *Witchblade* writer Christina Z.

Hey,

Why are comics printed in Mexico two years behind the American schedule? And if Marvel knows what wasn't successful in America (like the Spider-Man "Clone Saga" story), why print it in Mexico two years later?

Richard Almeida
retroricardo@hotmail.com

Mexico is still a touchy subject for me, given my recent unjust incarceration there. So I hope you appreciate this.

Publishers such as Marvel have licensing deals with publishers in foreign countries. Between the contracting, the translation, and the fact that they're intended for U.S. publication first, the whole process of getting a foreign version out takes time—often two years or so.

As to why they publish what "wasn't successful," well...the "Clone Saga" *was* successful in terms of sales. And what the hell—it's just sitting there. Ya might as well do something with it. And, as Marvel Czar of Information Bill Rosemann reminds us, there's diff'rent strokes for diff'rent folks. "Remember, the French love Jerry Lewis and the Swiss love David Hasselhoff!" quoth the Czar.

Dear Jim and *Wizard* Crew,

I've noticed that each monthly *Wizard* cover usually depicts a major/popular character such as Superman, Batman, Wolverine or Witchblade. This is all fine and good, but it would be nice to see some unsung characters on *Wizard* covers. Maybe the Spectre, Jonah Hex, Black Lightning, Popeye, Felix the Cat or Gigantor, to name a few.

Perhaps if you'd do a quick rundown on the history of these characters, you could give insight to future generations of fans and start a comeback for some of these creations that fans may know little or nothing about.

James Bates Jr.
Stamford, CT

Yep. Been 'bout three years.

The writer/artist with the funny-sounding name became a 16-year-old sensation with *CreeD* in 1994 before moving on to character design work for Fox Entertainment and JNCO. He says he's currently "sitting on three unpublished issues of *CreeD* that I just can't seem to find a strong publisher for," and he's

Popeye?

The fact of the matter is this: Wolverine feeds the bulldog. Felix the Cat don't. For every one reader who might like a Felix cover, another hundred would say, "What the heck is this crap?" But we're always open to suggestions. If enough

HEY! IT'S PEN PALS...

Send your name, address, age, sex, e-mail address and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the "Magic Words" address at the end of this column (put your age on the envelope). **Pre-'98 entrants:** Please resend your entries.

FRANKIE FRANCO
Age: 16 Sex: Male
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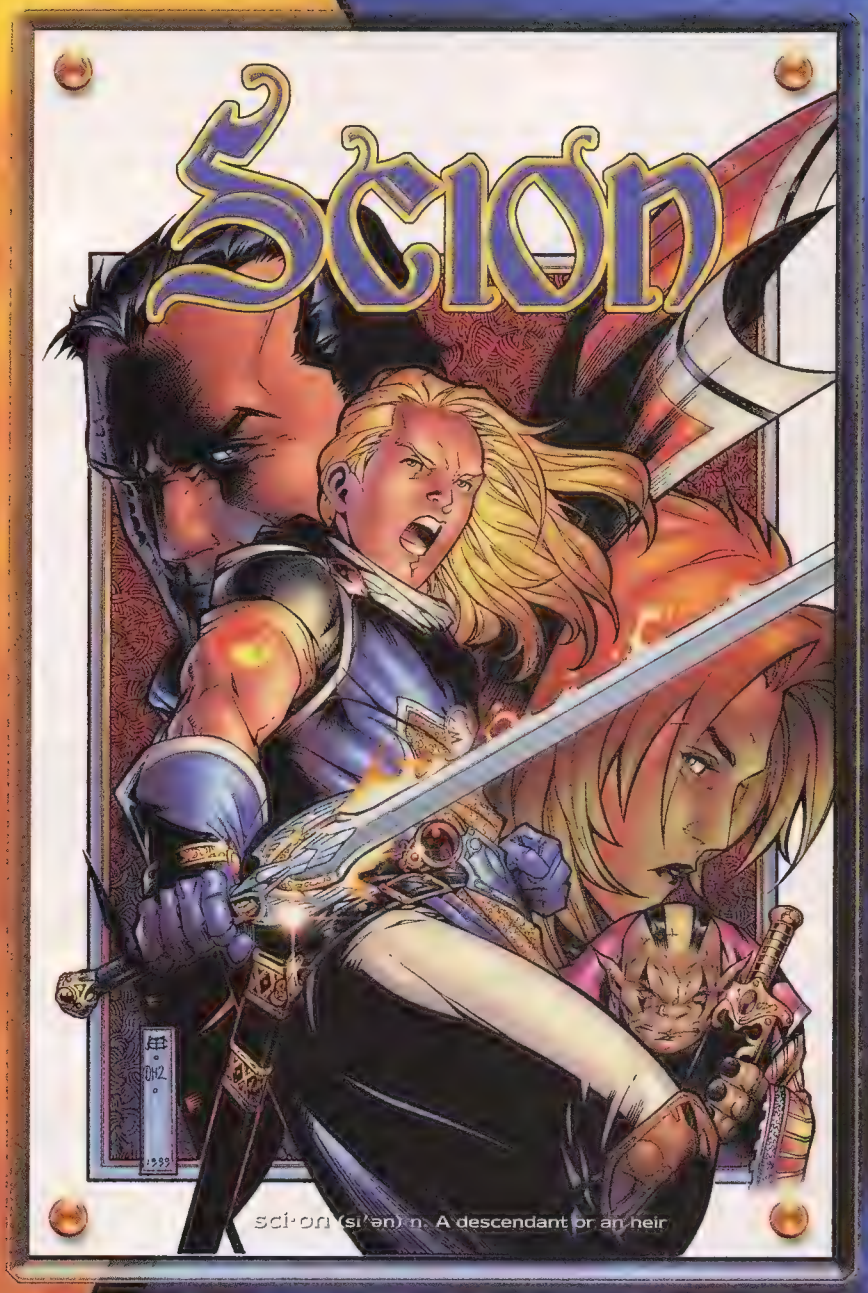
Likes: *Fantastic Four, Gen13*, X-Men

JEANETTE SNYDER
Age: 22 Sex: Female
P.O. Box 924
Colonial Heights, VA 23824
Likes: *Generation X, Witchblade, Sailor Moon*

ANGEL HERNANDEZ
Age: 14 Sex: Male
2714 Yanez Street
Donna, TX 78537
Likes: Superman books, *Tomb Raider, Green Lantern*



Scion #1 By Ron Marz, Jim Cheung, Don Hillsman II & Caesar Rodriguez

Set on a world where a fantasy façade hides advanced technology, a young prince named Ethan stands on the verge of manhood. As he prepares to take part in the ritual combat that keeps the peace between rival kingdoms, a mysterious sigil appears on Ethan's arm, leading to tragedy in the arena. Ancient hatreds flare, and Ethan's life is forever changed. Penciler Jim Cheung's work on X-Force was only a prelude to his dynamic artistry on SCION, while writer Ron Marz comes to the book fresh from his acclaimed run on Green Lantern.

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QUICK HITS

THE READERS STRIKE BACK

"Grant Morrison is a crybaby ('Morrison Calls it Quits,' *Wizard* #102)! Morrison has been given special treatment at DC so long, his current criticisms seem the spiteful rants of a spoiled child."
–David Romero Jr., Scranton, PA

"When I read in 'Coming Attractions' (*Wizard* #103) that 'Clerks II' will be Kevin Smith's last Jay and Silent Bob movie, I was almost brought to tears. Those movies have been some of the best things in my life."
–Zach Hartley, Linthicum, MD

"Thank you for the 'Snoopy in Paradise' drawing by Terry Moore in your Charles Schulz tribute in *Wizard* #103. I was feeling pretty bad before I saw it, but the drawing just seemed to cheer me up."
–Michael Powell, Seattle, WA

"If you're not reading the new *Superman*, you're an idiot! Jeph Loeb is *the* Superman writer. This is the best Superman we've seen in just about forever."
–Jeremy Bellor, saintofkillers21@aol.com

"I have an idea for 'Last Man Standing': Professor X vs. Psyduck from Pokémon! Both have mind powers. It's a great match in the works!"
–Nathan Kyle Saulmon, Newport News, VA

SURVEY SAYS

ONLINE POLL OF THE MONTH

Everybody knows that the X-Men blockbuster movie coming out this summer will feature Professor X, Magneto, Jean Grey, Cyclops, Wolverine, Sabretooth, Storm, Rogue, Mystique and the Toad. But our question for you is: **Which X-Men member that's not in the movie do you most wish was in the movie?** Go right now to wizardworld.com, click on the "Polling Plaza" button and vote away! ■ THE *WIZARD* STAFF

readers write in and demand Stars and S.T.R.I.P.E. (a very cool book, by the way) on the cover, we'll make it happen.

We're willing to try some wacky stuff, like the "montage" cover on this very issue. And our covers have "evolved" recently, having gone to a more text-heavy format. So whatchoo think of the recent changes? Send me a letter and lemme know.

Dear *Wizard*,

What type of lead pencils do Chris Bachalo, Mike Turner and Jim Lee use? I'm an aspiring comic artist and I use an F-lead. Is that suitable for comic art?

Cesar I. Rosas
Los Angeles, CA

Hail, Cesar!

For those of you scoring at home, the grades of pencil lead going from softest to hardest are: 4B, 3B, 2B, B, HB, F, H, 2H, 3H, 4H. Softer leads give you darker lines, and the harder you go, the lighter you go. Git it?

Is your F-lead suitable? Sure, if that's what suits you. "In the art world, there are no rules," says Chris Bachalo. "Whatever makes the line you enjoy is most important. In my early days, I used a 2H lead. Now in my old age I've gone soft and use an HB."

The younger Mike Turner still uses the harder 2H. "It's harder than a standard No. 2 pencil," Turner says. "But some guys like to go really light. I believe Joe Benitez uses a 4H on *Magdelena*."

And congratulations, you've found your soulmate. Jim Lee uses an F-grade, just like you. Now ain't that special?

Dear *Wizard*,

In *Wizard* #88, you pictured Joe Madureira's studio and I noticed some of his manga reference books. Could you tell me the titles of a few and tell me where I could get them?

Davon Applewhite
Queens, NY

Sure. The Mad Man's faves include *Gunsmith Cats*, *Bastard!*, *Steam Detectives*, *Street Fighter* and *Fatal Fury*. For these and other nifty-swell big-eyed tomes, Madureira recommends Nikaku Animart in San Jose, Calif. They can be reached at 408-971-2822 or nikahu@netcom.com.

Hey Jim,

I was wondering: What comic book has had the longest run ever? And what is currently the longest running title? I ask because I just read *Detective Comics* # 742. Wow! That seems kind of hard to beat!

Justin Heggs
jheggs@telusplanet.net

It is kinda hard to beat. However, DC's *Action Comics* (#767 as of May 2000) has *Detective*'s #745 beat. *Detective* actually

ILLUSTRATION BY JACK GRAY.

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Likes: *Spawn*, X-Men, Ian Churchill

Meridian #1 By Barbara Kesel, Joshua Middleton, Dexter Vines & Mike Atiyeh

Every year, Sephie's Uncle Ilahn comes to visit the floating city-state of Meridian. But this time his visit triggers a chain of events that turns Sephie's life upside-down and puts Ilahn on the road to ruling Meridian. Now she bears the mysterious sigil, but so does he...

MERIDIAN is by writer Barbara Kesel (Hawk & Dove), hot new artist Joshua Middleton, inker Dexter Vines (Wolverine), and colorist Mike Atiyeh.

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HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST

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Yep, it's that time o' year again...Halloween! Sure, the pumpkin carving's months away, but now's when you should start working on your killer Halloween costume! *Wizard*'s ninth annual Halloween Costume Contest has begun, and we want YOU to dress up like your favorite character! Whip up the best costume, and you could take home a $2,500 gift certificate to Toys 'R' Us!

JUST DO IT

Create the most funkadelic costume around, but remember to follow these simple rules:

1) Dress up like anyone (or anything) you want—comic book character, video game character, action figure, something out of a book or movie, whatever (the more original, the better your chances).

2) The actual costume itself must be HOMEMADE, but you can add store-bought items to accent it, like a toy gun for your Tomb Raider costume.

3) Have someone photograph you in your costume (Polaroids will NOT be accepted!), then write your name, age, full address, phone number and name of your character on a small piece of paper, attach it to the back of the photo and send it to the address below. All photos must be color prints, and we suggest taking multiple shots with multiple poses in case some pictures blow. And remember to focus!

4) To be eligible to win, **WE MUST RECEIVE YOUR PHOTO BY AUGUST 1, 2000**, so get sewin'!

Send your entry to:
Costume Contest 9
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-0118

launched first, but *Action* went weekly for a while, hence the higher number.

But the all-time champeen is a li'l number called *Dell Four Color*, which ran a staggering 1,354 issues between 1939 and 1962. At its current rate, *Action* will need just another 49 years to catch up.

Dear *Wizard*,

I have two Gold Key Comics issues of *Doctor Solar*, but I can't figure out what numbers they are. One is numbered 10000-210, the other is numbered 10000-303. Can you help me out with this?

April Hatch
Virginia Beach, VA

Sure. Your 10000-210 is actually #1, and 10000-303 is #3. So what's the "code" to figuring out these wacky numbers? There is none. Just ignore 'em and look at the fine-print copyright info. This is the case on many Gold Key books.

Dear Jim,

Did you know the letters in "McLauchlin" can be rearranged to spell "Claim lunch?"

Mike Capobianco
drsmiley@cgo.wave.ca

I guess that explains a lot about me.

Come to think of it, I am kinda hungry. In-N-Out Burger beckons. I must heed its call. Until next month, I remain...

—Jim McLauchlin

Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? Not Jim McLauchlin. Hell, he doesn't even care!

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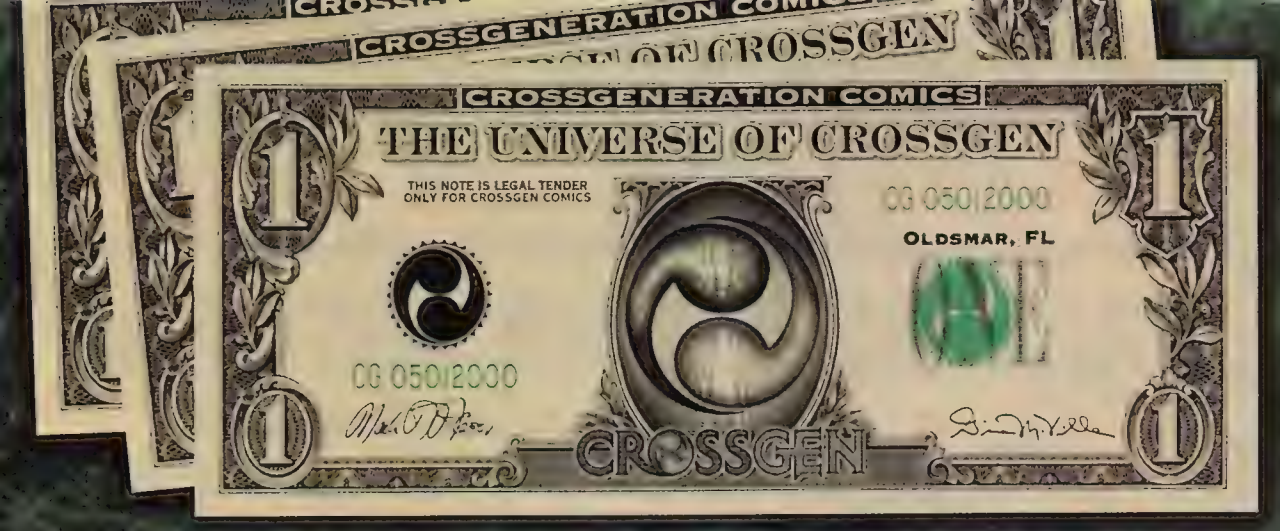
THE GREATEST quotes

"DO YOU KNOW WHAT A FLUFFER IS?"
—PORN DIRECTOR NEAL PATRICK HARRIS, EXPLAINING TO JAY HIS JOB ON THE SET, JAY AND SILENT BOB #2



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RAIDERS OF THE LOST ART

WIZARD EXCLUSIVE!

Startling discovery leads Marvel to ask: Was Stan Lee's Sentry the 1st Marvel hero?

Marvel's struck gold.

Or Silver, as it were.

The folks at Marvel have uncovered both descriptions and character sheets for a Silver Age character called the Sentry, created by Stan Lee and artist Artie Rosen in 1961, *Wizard* has exclusively learned.

Rumors have been swirling about the existence of the pre-Fantastic Four Marvel hero for months, and while Lee's attachment to the project has always been suspected, Rosen's involvement is something of a surprise.

Rosen, an artist whose comic career spanned four decades, may be best remembered for his art on *Crime Can't Win* for Marvel/Atlas Comics. He passed away in January.

In fact, Rosen's passing actually paved the way for the discovery of the Sentry. Blanche Rosen, Artie's widow, found the file containing the Sentry information while organizing her husband's effects.

"Blanche mentioned she found a box labeled 'Marvel Comics' in the den," said Lee, who contacted the widow after his friend's death. "So she sent it back to the [Marvel] offices."

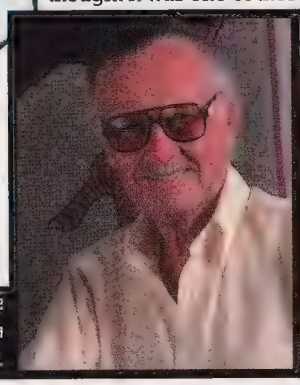
That's where Paul Jenkins came in.

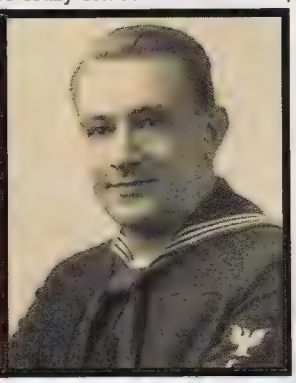
The *Hulk* writer unknowingly took the folder from *Iron Man* scribe Joe Quesada's office.

"I was rooting around for some stuff to read during my trip home, and Joe told me to grab something from the [submissions] pile," Jenkins said. "Honestly, I didn't even notice the Sentry stuff."

When Jenkins finally got around to looking at the fateful folder, he discovered it contained sketches and a copy of *Startling Stories* #1— which reportedly contained the Sentry's first appearance. At the time, the writer said he basically ignored its incredible contents.

"I just thought it was an old comic," Jenkins said. "I thought it was one of those crazy old comic characters,





SENTRY DUTY Stan Lee and Artie Rosen, far right, collaborated on a sketch of the Sentry, above, in 1961.

LEE PHOTO BY AL ORTEGA, ROSEN PHOTO COURTESY OF BLANCHE ROSEN

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER, CLARK...IN ALL THE YEARS TO COME...IN YOUR MOST PRIVATE MOMENTS...I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER...MY HAND...AT YOUR THROAT...I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER...THE ONE MAN WHO BEAT YOU..."
–*BATMAN, AFTER HANDING SUPERMAN HIS ASS,* BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT *#4*

like the Blue Beetle, that I didn't know anything about.

"I put it to one side, and it just sat there."

Eventually, Jenkins picked up the material again and started to leaf through the descriptions of the Superman-like character. It was then he noticed the name at the top of one of the pages—"Stan Lee."

Intrigued, Jenkins sat down and read through the material in its entirety, coming away fairly impressed.

"I thought, 'Wow, this is pretty cool,' " he said. "I called Jae [Lee], told him about it, then sent him copies of the stuff."

The two men talked about the character, and, as Jenkins recalled, "something clicked." The *Inhumans* artist drew up some new, more modern character sketches and submitted them to Marvel Knights editors Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti, seeking permission to use the Sentry for their next MK project, bumping their planned *Namor of Atlantis* six-issue limited series.

"People wanted us to do Namor," Jenkins said, "but we thought this was really cool, so we decided to do it."

The Marvel Knights guys had never heard of the Sentry, and despite scouring both the Marvel library and *The Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe*, they came up empty-handed—though both admit their search triggered distant memories of the hero.

Quesada contacted Stan Lee for more information about the character—and to ask if he had any additional *Sentry* comics—but Lee couldn't initially recall having created the character.

"As far as I remember, there never was a Marvel Superman," Lee said. "But the idea sounds vaguely familiar."

Disheartened, the Marvel Knights asked Jenkins for all the contents of the Sentry folder, and only then did they realize the full scope of the discovery.

"The development sketches had Stan and Artie's names on it, and the date 1961," Quesada said. "We couldn't believe it. I mean, this was a Marvel superhero that predated the Fantastic Four."

Fantastic Four #1 hit comic racks in November 1961, introducing humanity into the world of superhero comics and ushering in the Marvel Era.

So could *Startling Stories* #1 come to supplant *FF* #1 as the catalyst for the "classic Marvel tradition"?

Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras admitted it's a possibility.

"The very existence of the Sentry runs contrary to everything we know about the origins of what is now the Marvel Universe," Harras said. "This is an incredible thing, a discovery that could very well force us to rewrite the history books."

As such, the character could prove to be a tremendous boon for both the House of Ideas and Lee, who's excited to hear Marvel will revive his "lost" character.

"This is going to be great," the industry legend said. "I have complete faith in Joe, Jimmy, Paul and Jae.

"I'm sure they'll do Artie and me proud."

With Lee's blessing, the Marvel Knights put the project on the fast track, and hope to release the first issue of *The Sentry* in mid-summer.

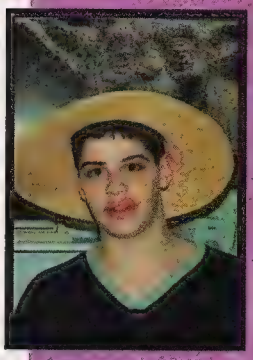
"I was very excited we'd uncovered some character that had previously fallen by the wayside," Jenkins said. "And, in a way, it's even more exciting that Jae and I will revive this character that people are very, very unfamiliar with."

So does Quesada think he could have any more lost treasures in his office? Some long-unseen drawings by Jack Kirby or John Romita, Sr.?

"Anything's possible, I guess," he laughed. "Whenever somebody sends something blindly to Marvel it has a funny way of getting dropped in my office.

"Never fails." ■ **CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE**

BACK TO THE FUTURE Jae Lee and Paul Jenkins will launch a new Sentry project this summer.



Record for most cherry ices eaten in an hour broken in Mexico. "Si, I ate 42," said winning child, who then went into an ice cream headache-induced coma.

Crappy beard garners mean-spirited ribbing at local biker bar. "Haw...that's one crappy beard," said possible Zappa descendant.

Jesse Ventura's choice for Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota responds to critics. "Grab them cakes!" yells embarrassment to the country.

THE BUZZBIN

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE COMIC INDUSTRY

STAN LEE AT DC! Comic legend and Marvel grandpappy Stan Lee is eyeing some new heroes–DC's heroes! Insider rumblings continue that Lee will take a swing at DC heavy hitters in an extended "Elseworlds" mini-series. Rumor has it pencil-jockeys are already jostling for position to get in on the event, if and when it should happen.

TURNER D. CENTURY! *Fathom* superstar penciler Michael Turner put his money where his mouth was: Stores that ordered 1,000+ copies of *Fathom* #12 got a Turner in-store signing appearance. The result? Mighty Mike will show at 30 stores! Any takers on when we'll see *Fathom* #13?

ELLIS RESURRECTS! With *Punisher* going without the Comics Code, Marvel's also looking to resurrect the *Satanna* mini-series by writer Warren Ellis spiked three years ago over (*ahem*) adult issues.

RISING ARTISTS! Writer J. Michael Straczynski loves variety, so he's looking to rotate in new artists for each 8-issue "act" of his hit *Rising Stars*. Rumor has it current *Kin* penciler Gary Frank might be up for a tour of duty.

MARVEL HAS A COW! No contracts have been signed yet, but rumor has it Marvel and Top Cow are discussing a major company crossover. Titles hinted at so far include *Fathom/Namor* and *The Darkness/Wolverine*.

BATTLE WEARY! Advance scouts tell us Joe Madureira's *Battle Chasers* #7 may be on stands by November 2000. After that, Madureira plans on taking the book...bi-monthly. We'll believe it when we see it.

GHOSTBUSTED! Sources at DC reveal *The Spectre* ongoing series by J.M. DeMatteis has been put on hold. Hal Jordan fans can take heart, however–the three issues of the series already completed will appear in *Legends of the DC Universe*.

THAT '70s SHOW The Marvel rumor mill reports Jim Krueger (*Earth X*) is in the midst of reviving some 1970s-era superheroes for an upcoming comic project.

HOLY HELLBLAZER! Brian Azzarello (*100 Bullets*, *Hellblazer*) is considering writing another Batman/Spawn crossover. Speaking of Azzarello, DC's already got plans to collect his recent *Hellblazer* arc, "Hard Time." DC insiders say John Constantine alums Garth Ennis and Alan Moore have contacted the DC powers-that-be to say Azzarello's a keeper.

JAMMIN' FOR JUSTICE Flash playing bass? Martian Manhunter pounding the drums? Not exactly. But there's a band calling itself Justice League that's touring right now. For tour dates and info, check the official Website: www.jazzisdead.com/justice.html.

JLA BAND

SPIDEY BUG BITES JENKINS

Marvel looks to Paul to make Peter neater

With great power comes great responsibility—especially for Paul Jenkins.

The writer, who's already revived the Inhumans, recharged Witchblade and resuscitated the Hulk, now sets his sights on an even greater goal—bringing back Spider-Man.

ITSY BITSY SPIDER Down came the rain and washed the spider out.

The House of Ideas tapped Jenkins and artist Mark Buckingham to take over the reins of *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* with June's issue #20. They'll replace the team of Howard Mackie and John Romita Jr., who'll still collaborate on *Peter Parker*'s sister title, *Amazing Spider-Man*.

"I think [Spider-Man editor] Ralph [Macchio] has come to the realization that maybe it's a good idea to retool Spider-Man a little bit," Jenkins said. "He just called me out of the blue and asked me if I'd be interested."

Boy, was he ever.

Jenkins, a self-professed web-head who's already penned a few Spidey stories for *Webspinners*, quickly devised some grand plans for his childhood hero.

"I'm very interested in returning him to the sort of younger optimist that he has been...and can be," Jenkins said.

In addition, he's shooting to bring back the sense of adventure that once surrounded Spider-Man, as well as the sense of empathy tied to his alter-ego.

"When I was a kid reading the book, I really cared about whether Peter Parker would make it home in time for dinner," Jenkins said, pointing out it's elements like that which originally made Spider-Man great. "He's probably less worried about whether or not he can beat Doctor Octopus as whether he can do it in time to take Aunt May to the hospital."

Jenkins, who already writes *Hulk* and *Witchblade* on a monthly basis, has already sat down with Mackie to coordinate the development of the character.

"The characterization's what I'm really interested in," he said. "I look at Spider-Man and say, 'Wow, there are loads of cool stories I could do with him.' " ■ CL

THE GREATEST quotes

"WE'RE THE AVENGERS, MISTER. AND YOU'RE HOLDING THREE OF OUR FRIENDS AGAINST THEIR WILL. WILL YOU RELEASE THEM NOW–OR DO WE HAVE TO START BREAKING THINGS MORE PAINFUL THAN WALLS?"
–*IRON MAN AND CAPTAIN AMERICA TO THE TASKMASTER*, AVENGERS *#196*

BAT CHANGES ABOUND

Hama drops, Brubaker and Vaughan to wing it as Bat-writers until permanent scribe named

The changes just keep coming for Batman.

He's changed costumes, Batmobiles and partners. Now he's changing writers.

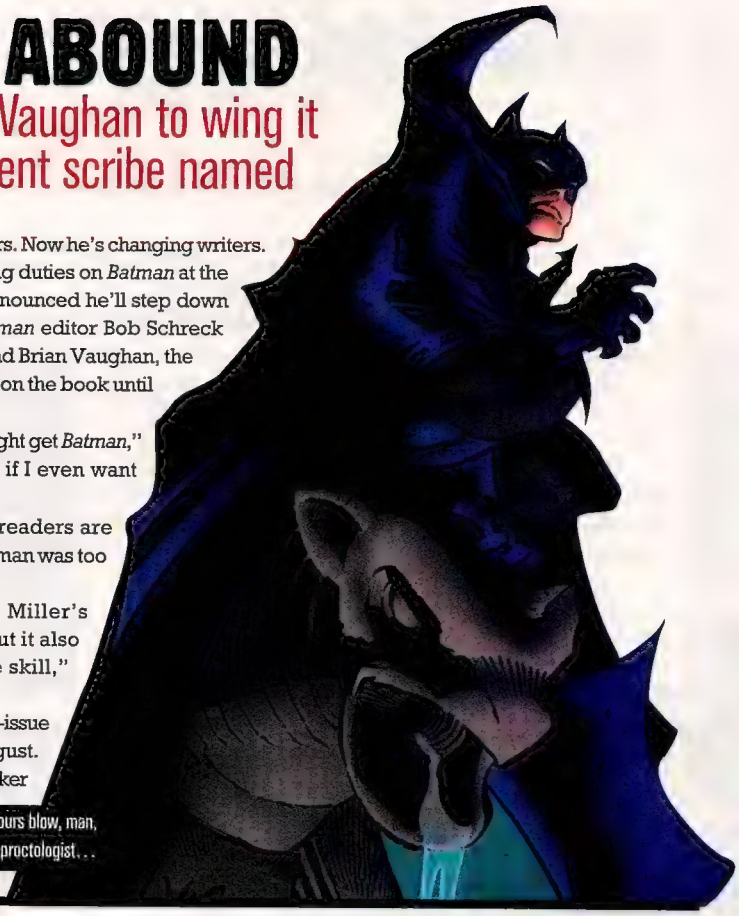
Just months after Larry Hama took over the writing duties on *Batman* at the tail end of the "No Man's Land" storyline, he has announced he'll step down after issue #580 due to "creative differences." *Batman* editor Bob Schreck pegged Ed Brubaker, writer of *Scene of the Crime* and Brian Vaughan, the pen behind the new *Swamp Thing* series, to swap off on the book until a permanent writer is named.

"I keep thinking if I kick ass on these six issues I might get *Batman*," Brubaker said. "But then sometimes I don't know if I even want Batman or if he wants me."

Brubaker's take on *Batman* may be just what readers are hoping for after complaints surfaced that Hama's Batman was too dialogue heavy and superficial.

"The plot I have in will be closer to Frank Miller's *Daredevil*, where there will be a hero element but it also focuses on Batman's humanity and his detective skill," Brubaker said.

Brubaker plans to start his run on *Batman* with a two-issue story beginning with issue #581 scheduled for August. Vaughan will follow with two more issues and then Brubaker will return for a four-issue story. Penciller Scott McDaniel will remain on *Batman*. ■ MIKE COTTON



KNIGHT SHIFT "These hours blow, man, maybe I should've been a proctologist...

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AVENGERS BECOME SPACE CADETS

Everybody likes to get away for the summer—even the Mighty Avengers.

Marvel's preeminent superteam will rack up the frequent flier miles in July, soaring into space in *Avengers Infinity* and "visiting" a fantasy realm in *Avatars*.

Avengers Infinity, a four-issue limited series by Roger Stern and Sean Chen, will feature a roster different from the monthly series, Editor Tom Brevoort revealed, a "separate, but equal" group of heroes (including Thor) who assemble for a mission to the stars.

"It's a big, sweeping Avengers space adventure," he said. "It's fairly integral to the Avengers—and the Marvel Universe—overall."

The series spins out of a seed planted in issue #10 of *Avengers Forever*, in which the Timekeepers mention a battle between Earth's Mightiest Heroes and a group of cosmic-level beings called the Infinites.

Avatars, an Avengers-inspired three-issue mini-series by Len Kaminski, Oscar Jimenez and Eduardo Alpuente, is a fantasy-based story featuring a new cast of characters who are "somewhat familiar in some regards," Brevoort said.

And while the new characters will be "hauntingly familiar," Brevoort said they won't necessarily act in familiar ways.

"This is not a superhero book," he said. "This is something nifty, different and slightly off the beaten track."

How far off the track? Well, the setting for *Avatars* is the world of Eurth, a realm the editor likens to Middle Earth in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*.

"I challenge all those folks who say 'I wish Marvel would do something different' to check out this book." ■ CL

PULP FICTION "Yep, we're gonna get medieval on your asses."

CAUGHT IN THE WEB

COOL INTERNET STUFF

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CARTOON NETWORK It's easy to kill a couple o' hours at cartoonnetwork.com, where surfers can play games like Hong Kong Phooey's House of Chop, Thundercats Tomb of Mumm-Ra and Extreme Pong; see storyboards, model sheets and backgrounds for some of the most beloved cartoons ever made ("Challenge of the Superfriends," "The Herculoids"); take a virtual tour of the Hanna-Barbera studios and download original shows, interactive movies and cartoon clips–including everyone's favorite purple-clad shapeshifters, the Wonder Twins.

GHOST IN THE MACHINE

ICONS FOR THE AGES Looking to give your desktop a facelift? Head over to iconsplus.com, the home of tons o' decorative comic book, sci-fi, TV, movie and pop culture icons. In addition to the desktop patterns, fonts and desktop pictures, the site offers a massive number of free, downloadable comic book icons, featuring both the obvious (the Avengers, JLA, Fantastic Four and the X-Men) and the obscure (DC's Golden Age, Amalgam, and Valiant).

NEAL ADAMS/CONTINUITY STUDIOS Surf over to www.nealadams.com for the latest and greatest from the famed comic book artist. The site contains a Neal Adams gallery (check out his Jim Carrey/Riddler and Tommy Lee Jones/Two Face sketches), a list of Adams interviews (complete with reviews) and clips of the cartoon Neal and Continuity created for a Swamp Boogie Queen music video. There's also a page of drawing tips, which includes a link to amazon.com to help fans pick up any of the books recommended by the longtime Batman penciler.

HEAVY METAL REUNION

'Bad Blood' brews between classic 'Iron Man' team

Iron Man's having a reunion this summer—in more ways than one.

Marvel's four-issue *Iron Man: Bad Blood* mini-series will not only reunite Tony Stark with former series regulars Jim Rhodes and Justin Hammer, it'll mark the return of Bob Layton and David Michelinie, the creators responsible for some of the most memorable Shell-head stories ever told.

The duo did two stints on the title, from issues #116-#157 and from #215-#250, and their run included the renowned alcoholism storyline.

"It's great working with Bob on *Iron Man* again," Michelinie said. "He and I have been trying to get projects going together for some time...It's a lot of fun."

Set to ship in July, *Iron Man: Bad Blood* will center on the once-close relationship between Rhodes and Stark.

"For our purposes, we want to re-establish the strength of the friendship," the writer revealed. "Even though it could be strained and torn over the years, there's pretty much nothing that's actually going to break up the friendship."

Rhodey's gonna be in Seattle working on a salvage job when he notices something sinister's happening to Tony, according to Michelinie.

"It's up to Rhodey to find out what's going on and who is behind this dangerous metamorphosis and to stop things before the alteration becomes immutable." ■ CL

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"YOU WERE ALWAYS JUST A WEIRD GUY WE PUT UP WITH 'CAUSE YA HAD A 'PET' THUNDERBOLT."
–AL PRATT (THE ATOM), WHILE INTERVIEWING JOHNNY THUNDER FOR A U.S. SPONSORED SUPERGROUP, GOLDEN AGE *#2*

GAIMAN SEES THE LIGHT

DC unearths Green Lantern/Superman tale by 'Sandman' star

Jumbo shrimp. Civil War. Neil Gaiman and superheroes?

While Gaiman and superheroes may seem like an oxymoron given his eclectic comic background, the British superstar actually penned a Green Lantern/Superman team-up 10 years before his Vertigo title *Sandman* exploded into comic book lore. DC Comics never published that Green Lantern/Superman team-up. That was, until now.

FOGHORN ALERT "Ah, say, Ah, say, Superman that ain't no chicken hawk!"

Green Lantern editor Bob Schreck said Gaiman unearthed the project while going through old work he'd completed.

"[Gaiman] came across it and joked 'Wouldn't it be funny if we did this now?' " Schreck said. "And now we're doing it. I know he's not usually associated with superheroes but this works.

"It's pretty neat."

The story, according to Schreck, revolves around the discovery of an ancient Green Lantern battery unearthed by archeologists and put on exhibit in Metropolis.

As Green Lantern and Superman investigate the strange artifact, things go downhill quickly. The two heroes get sucked into the lantern and have to fight their way back into reality.

And for the first time in years, Silver Age Green Lantern fans can rejoice.

"Since this is from 10 years ago, this is a Hal Jordan story," Schreck said. "We didn't try to put [current GL] Kyle [Rayner] in there. You get some pretty intense moments, though."

Besides containing the Gaiman story, the prestige format book will also include work by some of the best artists in comics, including Kevin Nowlan from *Tomorrow Stories*, longtime *Batman* artist Jim Aparo and a cover by Frank Miller.

DC hopes to have the project in stores this spring. ■ MC

UP&COMERS

SPOTLIGHT ON CREATORS TO WATCH

BRIAN AZZARELLO

PRIOR CREDITS: Wrote the *Johnny Double* mini-series and has contributed to just about every Vertigo anthology series to date. And the Chicago-based writer is the first non-Brit to write Vertigo's *Hellblazer*.

WHAT HE DOES: Right now, he's writing some of the most realistic dialogue and ruthless characters in comics, while turning *100 Bullets* into a runaway hit and *Hellblazer* back into Vertigo's flagship book with only four issues.

WHY HE'LL BE HOT: His *100 Bullets* and *Hellblazer* will both continue their hot streak into the summer. So, expect plenty more of Azzarello's biting stories, X-rated street talk and insanely violent reality-based reads, including Izzy's return in *100 Bullets* and a trip to W. Virginia by John Constantine.

UPCOMING PROJECTS: More Vertigo stuff. Azzarello plans an *El Diablo* mini-series with art by Frank Teran (*Batman* #564, *Detective Comics* #731). The writer calls the series a "spirit of retribution story...you could even call it a noir western." Azzarello will also write a "Batman Black and White" backup story penciled by *100 Bullets* collaborator Eduardo Risso.

QUOTABLE: "I heard Alan Moore said *Hellblazer* was good. So now I don't care if anybody blows me sh—. The guy who created the character liked him, so f— [the critics]! ■ MC

BRIAN AZZARELLO PHOTO BY TIM BOUSTREET

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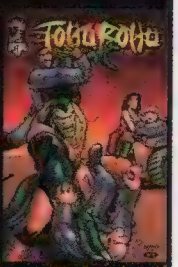

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ROSS' BONE #1

- Cartoon Books will launch Act III of Jeff Smith's *Bone* in June with an event titled "Three for Three." *Bone* #38, entitled "Ghost Circles," will feature three separate covers, designed by Smith, Frank Miller and **Alex Ross**.

- Chaos! Comics redesigned June's ***Lady Death*** pinup book to serve as a tribute to Steven Hughes, the recently deceased artist who was responsible for much of the look of Chaos! Comics. Retitled *Lady Death by Steven Hughes* #1, sales of the title will benefit Hughes' family. The book will include five all-new pinups. A second tribute is reportedly in the works.

- WildStorm has postponed ***Racer X*** #1, canceling all orders for the Tommy Yune title. WildStorm will resolicit the title at a future date.

- Horror novelist and ***Cable*** writer Robert Weinberg will pen a supernaturally themed X-Men mini-series set to hit stores weekly in October. The series, which is still in the planning stages, is tentatively titled *Citadel of Night*.

- Though ***Preacher*** rapidly approaches its series climax, writer Garth Ennis has no plans to leave his Vertigo roots behind. The scribe is developing a three-issue, war-themed mini-series called *Adventures In The Rifle Brigade* for the mature-themed imprint. The series will be drawn by Carlos Ezquerra, with Brian Bolland covers.

- ***Spawn: The Dark Ages*** will boast a new creative team, starting with issue #15 (tentatively scheduled for May), when writer Steve Niles, newcomer penciler Nat Jones and inker Chance Wolf jump on board.

- Ultra-hot writer **Warren Ellis** will try his hand at scripting DC's Dark Knight. Ellis is working on a 48-page Prestige Planetary/Batman crossover book for WildStorm/DC. Titled *Planetary/Batman: Night on Earth*, the story will be drawn by *Planetary* artist John Cassaday.

- Jimmy Palmiotti's gonna be the man behind the mouth. The *Daredevil* inker will script Marvel's "Merc-With-A-Mouth" for three months, beginning with September's ***Deadpool*** #46. *Concrete* creator Paul Chadwick will contribute the art.

- The kids of **Power Pack** will return this summer in a four-issue limited series by writer Shon C. Bury, penciler Colleen Doran and inker Terry Austin. The Power family's relocated to the Pacific Northwest to give the children, who have aged about a year since they were last seen, a new life.

BENDIS WRITES NEW 'SPAWN' ONGOING

Think the undead, hamburger-headed Spawn can't get any uglier? Think again.

Eisner Award-winning writer Brian Michael Bendis (*Sam and Twitch*) and artist Ashley Wood (*Ghost Rider 2099*) are taking Todd McFarlane's signature creation down an even more gruesome path in August with *Hellspawn*. The new Image Comics ongoing series replaces *Spawn the Undead* and dials up the grisly factor.

"I'm doing a very dark, adult-oriented Spawn," Bendis promised. "Todd wanted to up the ante on the maturity level. Hopefully, this'll be very terrifying, weird, wonderful and all that stuff."

Bendis knows terror. He's won awards and critical acclaim for his riveting crime graphic novels *Jinx*, *Goldfish* and *Torso*. Now, he's going down a slightly more superhero path. "There will be a lot of supporting characters you know from *Spawn*, but you'll see them in a very new way," Bendis said. "Even the design, the looks of the characters, will be totally different." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

THUMBINGOFF

THUMBS UP

'IRON MAN' *Iron Man*'s the best it's been since, like, 1989. Since new writer Joe Quesada took over in January with #26, Tony Stark's faced his greatest villain ever: his armor! Trapped inside his now-sentient armor at the end of #28, Tony can only watch as the armor pummels villain Whiplash to death! We can't wait to see what's next!

'HELLBLAZER' Brian Azzarello has put the "hell" back in *Hellblazer* with the latest issues #145–#147. Mysteriously in jail, black magic man John Constantine manipulates his way into the power structure, maims inmates in his way, and gets framed for the murder of a guard. How's he do all this? You don't exactly know–and that adds to the story's allure.

'STAR TREK: ALL OF ME' WildStorm's recent Trek one-shot perfectly nailed the themes, flavor, dialogue and pacing of the classic "Star Trek" TV show. Heck, this entertained us more than some of the original episodes!

THUMBS DOWN

BUTT KISSING Occasional tributes are one thing, but the incessant mention of Joe Quesada's friends in his *Iron Man* run are getting ridiculous. February's *IM* #27 featured bottles of Dillon Ale, Nelson Vodka, Ennis Fine Malt–all named after creator buddies. And in #28, a character asks to see "Dogma," Kevin Smith's latest movie that's been outtta theaters for over a month. These "tributes" really distract us from an otherwise great story.

PRICE GOUGING As if comics weren't expensive enough. Marvel just raised its standard prices to $2.25 and $2.50, and now DC's following suit. That's a really hard sell for new fans or casual readers, considering they can pick up a much thicker magazine or almost rent a video game for the same price.

'THUNDERBOLTS' While we're mostly digging the twists *Thunderbolts* has taken lately, we've gotta put up a red flag for the recent change in Abe Jenkins' (Mach-1) skin color to black (February's #37). It didn't work for the Punisher years ago and this one's a bit too contrived and comes off as cheap shock value.

THE GREATEST quotes

"ONE LOOK TELLS THE STORY. THERE'S NO NEED TO CHECK FOR A PULSE. BUT I DO ANYWAY. NOTHING. I'VE LOST HIM. HE'S ALREADY GETTING COLD TO THE TOUCH. GONE."
– *BATMAN, AS HE FINDS JASON TODD'S BODY,* BATMAN *#428*

THE GREATEST YEAR IN COMICS 1986

A YEAR TO REMEMBER

Comics never saw a year like 1986.

Fanboys may endlessly argue about their favorite character or series, but there's little doubt that 1986 was comicdom's greatest year. Don't think so? Think again. Here's why...

WATCHMEN

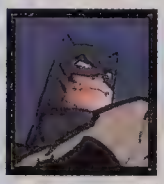
THE DEAL Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' story of a realistic world on the brink of nuclear war, where superheroes become outlaws in the U.S.

ITS LEGACY *Watchmen* proved a comic story didn't need recognizable heroes to be great. The series turned Moore into a comic god and still is considered today as the greatest story ever told.

BATMAN: YEAR ONE

THE DEAL Frank Miller explores Batman's rookie year as the Dark Knight fumbles through detective work, while learning he needs a friend in the Gotham City PD.

ITS LEGACY Besides heightening eventual Commissioner Gordon's impact as a character, *Year One* portrayed a more human Batman and made it okay for heroes to make mistakes. The success of *Year One* inspired retro lookbacks at the early careers of other comic heroes like Spider-Man and Superman.



BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS

THE DEAL Frank Miller took on the Dark Knight again, with this story of an older Batman who ditches retirement one last time to fight for Gotham City's protection.

ITS LEGACY Miller's grizzled Batman inspired the "dark ages" of comics–Marvel even turned the happy-go-lucky wallcrawler Spider-Man "dark" for awhile.

DARK HORSE COMICS

THE DEAL The first company to challenge the Big Two, new publisher Dark Horse focused on creator-owned work, like Paul Chadwick's *Concrete* (shown).

ITS LEGACY Fan-faves like Frank Miller, Matt Wagner and Stan Sakai have all flocked to the Horse to do creator-owned projects. Dark Horse also publishes comics for big-name properties like Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Star Wars.

X-MEN'S 'MUTANT MASSACRE'

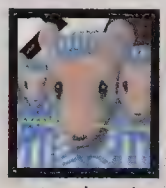
THE DEAL Countless mutants are killed off in one of the bloodiest storylines ever. And Angel's wings are mutilated, forever changing the character.

ITS LEGACY The first in what have become annual mega-X-crossovers, "Massacre" set a tone of bigotry and hate in *X-Men* still felt today.

DAREDEVIL'S 'BORN AGAIN'

THE DEAL In *Dark Knight*-like fashion, Frank Miller took Daredevil and put him through seven issues of hell and torture at the hands of his greatest rival, Kingpin. Kingpin ruined Daredevil's reputation, his career and his home–but ultimately failed in an execution attempt.

ITS LEGACY Miller forever changed DD's status quo by giving his secret identity to the Kingpin and shattering his life. Daredevil's darker stories all began in these seven issues.



MAUS

THE DEAL Art Spiegelman's gripping tale about the Holocaust, told in comic format, with Jews portrayed as mice and Nazis portrayed as cats.

ITS LEGACY *Maus* earned not only critical acclaim inside the comic book community, but garnered a special Pulitzer Prize that legitimized comics as a literary entity.

THE MAN OF STEEL

THE DEAL The first reboot in comic history, John Byrne rebuilt Superman from scratch at DC's request. Byrne's *Man of Steel* scaled down Superman's powers, redefining and rejuvenating the character and introducing a more menacing Lex Luthor.

ITS LEGACY While Byrne has gone on to revamp other characters such as Spider-Man, Hulk and Wonder Woman, his *Man of Steel* is still used as the basis for the modern Superman. ■ MC

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BOB INGERSOLL
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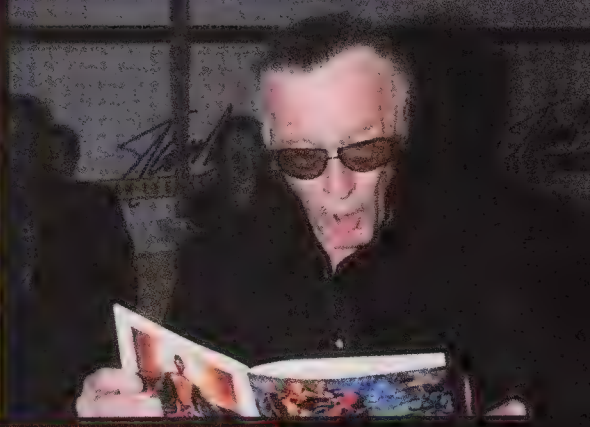
STAN LEE'S HOLLYWOOD HEROES

BY JIM McLAUCHLIN PHOTOS BY JILLY WENDELL



When Stan Lee throws a party, *everybody* gets invited.

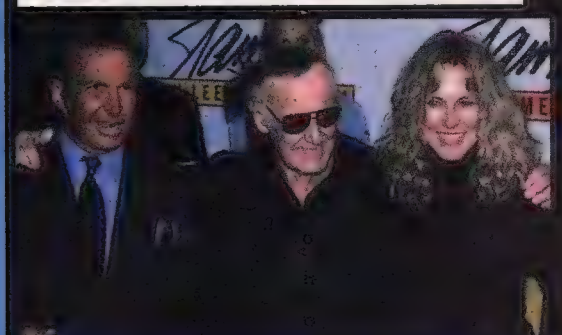
Well, everyone with a computer. Stan Lee Media, the new enterprise founded by Marvel legend Stan Lee, booted up on February 29 in grand style. *The 7th Portal*, SLM's first animated "Webisode" at www.stanlee.net, kick-started the company as live satellite feeds from Paris and Tokyo linked Web browsers into a world party. "The Internet has gotta be the most exciting advance in communications ever," a glowing Lee said as a screen beamed in from Tokyo. "We can reach the whole world at once and bring them right into our party."

Oh, yeah—the party! Those lucky enough to score an invite to the bash—just a gamma-boosted jump down the road from Lee's Beverly Hills home where Leonardo DiCaprio lives down the street—were treated to a $1-million-budget affair with more free drinks and shrimp cocktail than you could wobble a web at. And a few of Stan's buddies showed up to wish him well as *USA Today*, a crew from "Entertainment Tonight" and more than 20 photographers recorded the event. Our paparazzi popped, and Stan managed to wedge his way into a couple of shots. "Hey, it's my party," he said. "I'd like a memento or two, if you don't mind." And just to show you that all roads do indeed lead to comics, just take a look at the celebrities who attended and how they're connected to the comics industry in a Kevin Bacon, Six Degrees of Separation kind of way.

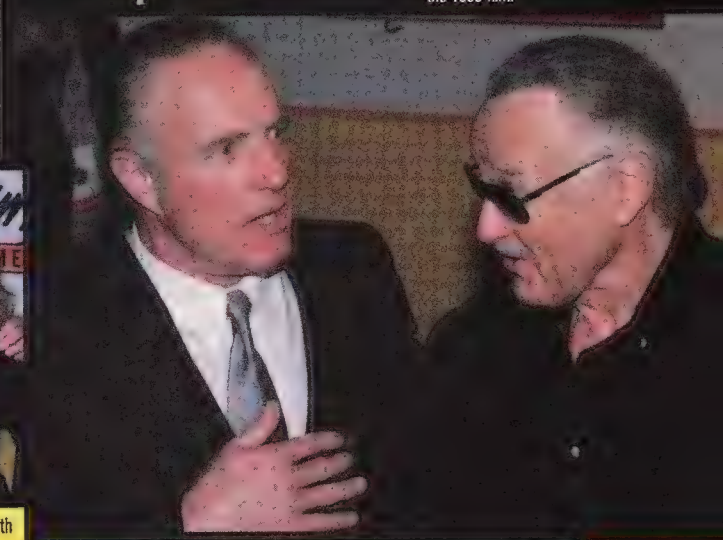
EYE SPY▲ Stan was amazed at the full frontal nudity in his own program.

CROSS OVER ▼ The Hulk and Superman met as Lou Ferrigno bumped into Dean Cain. Ferrigno played the Hulk on the '70s TV series and even voiced Greenskin in the short-lived '90s UPN cartoon. Former "Lois and Clark" star Cain used to play basketball on the Warner Bros. lot with "Batman" George Clooney.

MAKIN' MUSIC ▲ Dick Clark hosted the night's festivities, and music was provided by Chaka Khan and DJ Perry Farrell (from Jane's Addiction and Porno For Pyros). Clark once produced a TV pilot for CBS called "Where the Action Is" starring Paul Revere and the Raiders and Teri Garr. Garr co-starred in "Mr. Mom" with Michael Keaton, who played "Batman" in the 1989 film.



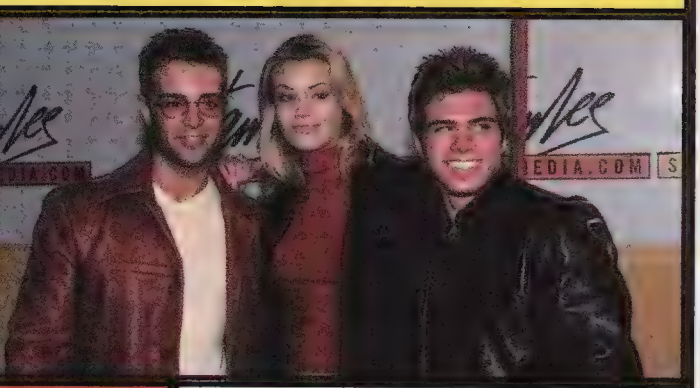
ALL IN THE FAMILY ▲ Veteran actor George Hamilton (left) showed up with ex-wife and talk-show hostess Alana Stewart. Hamilton appeared in "Doc Hollywood" with Michael J. Fox, who was in "Back to the Future," which was written by comic writer Bob Gale.



CAAN JOB ▲ Superstar James Caan ("Misery") put in an appearance to give Stan some pointers. Caan knows comics, having been in the "Dick Tracy" movie. Caan also starred in "The Godfather" with Marlon Brando, who played Jor-El in "Superman."

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"TO CATCH THEM IF THEY FALL."
—SUPERMAN, ANSWERING FLASH'S QUESTION AS TO WHAT PURPOSE THE JLA SERVES IN THE GRAND SCHEME OF HUMAN DESTINY, JLA #4

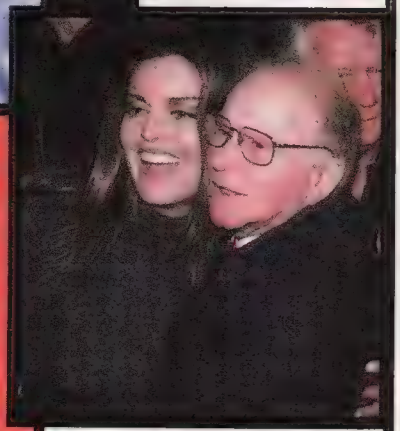


BOY TOYS ▲ Teen idol Joey Lawrence of "Blossom" (left) showed up with a female friend and brother Matthew Lawrence of "Boy Meets World" (right). Joey appeared in the film "Chains of Gold" with John Travolta, who co-starred with Nicolas Cage in "Face/Off." Cage wants to star in the next installment of the "Superman" franchise.

HAPPY DAYS ▲ Donny Most (Ralph Malph from "Happy Days") appeared in a 1993 movie called "Acting on Impulse" in which he co-starred with Linda Fiorentino, one of the stars of "Men in Black," based on the Malibu comic.

FARMER TED ▲ Fresh off an appearance in "Pirates of Silicon Valley," Anthony Michael Hall came to Stan's big bash. Hall appeared in "Edward Scissorhands," directed by "Batman" director Tim Burton.

◄BUDDY BUDDY David Faustino shows up at the party with his girlfriend. Faustino made his name on TV's "Married...With Children" with Ed O'Neill, who also starred in the movie "Blue Chips" with Shaquille O'Neal, the star of the comic film "Steel" and proud owner of a Superman tattoo on his biceps.



BUTTONED UP ► "Babylon 5" actress Tracy Scoggins was embraced by legendary comedian Red Buttons. Scoggins used to work for *Rising Stars* writer J. Michael Straczynski on "Babylon 5," while Buttons was in "The Poseidon Adventure" with Gene Hackman, who played Lex Luthor in three "Superman" films.

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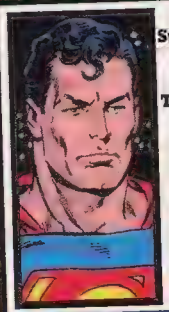


Superman	LEADER	Captain America
The Moon	HEADQUARTERS	New York City
Uh...let's go!	BATTLE CRY	Avengers Assemble!
Vibe	SECRET SHAME	Gilgamesh

The battle... Welcome to World War III. With millions of lives in the balance, the JLA and Avengers face off in the ultimate showdown. Following a rousing cry of "Avengers Assemble!," Earth's Mightiest Heroes prepare for battle. As Captain America sizes up his counterpart Batman, he barks out orders to his fellow Avengers. Thor, not missing a beat, hurls his enchanted hammer Mjolnir at Superman, knocking him clear of the battle. The Odinson chases down the Last Son of Krypton, starting an epic battle of their own which ends with the Asgardian victorious...barely. Meanwhile, just as Firestorm turns Cap's shield into cotton candy, Quasar bursts in to give the element-arranger a serious pounding. And the heroes continue to fall. Wonder Woman trounces She-Hulk. Namor snags Aquaman's harpoon as his prize. The Flash runs rings around Quicksilver. And the battle continues. Orion and Big Barda almost reach their limit as Goliath and Hercules fall. Green Arrow and Zatanna drop before Hawkeye and Scarlet Witch. Iron Man's energy (and experience) knocks Green Lantern out. And when the dust finally settles, there stands Captain America, Iron Man and Thor, facing Batman, Captain Marvel, Martian Manhunter, Wonder Woman, Orion and Big Barda. And while the battle continues to rage on for hours, the Avengers ultimately collapse before the sheer might of the World's Greatest Superheroes: the JLA.

Wanna see this crossover? Write to Marvel & DC right now! To see this month's unbelievable piece of art online, jump to wizardworld.com right now! And to BUY the original art, get in on the action with eBay (ebay.com) starting May 15!

this month's battle drawn by GEORGE PÉREZ

FIRSTLOOK

SHADOW HUNTERS

New twists on old monsters sure to scare up hordes of readers

"We're never going to run out of monsters."

So says *Shadow Hunters* co-writer and Wizard Entertainment Editor Mike Searle of the new Black Bull ongoing series debuting in August. "We've got werewolves that shapechange into whatever they eat, cannibalistic goblins that can squeeze through any opening, dream-coil dragons that eat your sleeping thoughts...that, and we'll be blowing up New York."

Shadow Hunters is the second launch for Black Bull and features writers Searle and *Wizard* Editor-in-Chief Pat McCallum with Greg Luzniak (*Venom* mini-series), Doug Wheatley (*Star Wars*) and Nelson (*The Eudaemon*) handling art chores.

Shadow Hunters follows the Vala sisters, Jesse and Claire—one of whom is the last witch alive. But which sister is witch?

"Mysteries. Plots. Secrets," says McCallum. "That's the point of this series. That and we don't have to worry about how what happens in our book would affect another title. We'll kill off main characters, blow up cities, and in the end, maybe the good guys won't win."

Joining the sisters will be a trio of "not-so-heroic heroes." Ruthless Helen Nightshade acts as the group's "benefactor"; the mercenary Exile has fought the forces of darkness before and guards an unforgivable secret; and the silent and mysterious Golem was created—literally—to combat the supernatural.

The conflict comes from five immensely powerful male witches—Warlocks—who need the Vala sisters dead so they can, in Searle's words, "do something horrific to the Earth. Not take it over, not blow it up...something much, much worse." Each possesses powers based on one of the five senses. There's Vigil, leader of the Warlocks, with his precognitive abilities; Seize, who can shred anything with a gesture; Wail, who can hear the voices of everyone that's ever died; and Fetor, who's body is composed of a noxious, acidic vapor. Rounding out the villains is the monstrous fifth warlock, Devour, and a secret sixth warlock who's "based on the 'sixth sense,'" McCallum says.

"What that sense is and who—or what—that hidden warlock is will blow readers' minds. We've got a big story to tell and it's an emotional roller coaster. We've been working on this project for almost a year, filling it with new ideas and crazy twists and turns. It's the best, kick-ass comic we know how to do."

Pennsylvania-based freelancer John B. Lacey knows all about the secret sixth sense. It starred Bruce Willis and some cute kid...

WHERE WOLF? Here wolf! Just don't expect your typical bark-at-the-moon lycanthropes.

BY JOHN B. LACEY

HUNTINGSEASON

THE DILLY-O

It's *Shadow Hunters*, a new ongoing monthly title and second release from Black Bull Entertainment. It's written by Wizard Entertainment's Pat McCallum and Mike Searle with art by Greg Luzniak (*Venom* mini-series), Doug Wheatley (*Star Wars*) and Nelson (*The Eudaemon*). A special *ACE Edition Preview* hits in May, with the ongoing to follow in August.

WHY YOU CARE

Monsters aplenty! But if you're expecting the monsters from those old Universal black-and-white flicks, forget it; there are no everyday, run-of-the-mill creatures in *Shadow Hunters*. They're classic beasties with a whole new twist!

DID YOU KNOW?

Every one of Golem's tattoos is an actual symbol from various religions and cultures, each with a specific meaning and power.

THE GREATEST
COMEBACK
RE

LOAD!

Punisher caps his comics comeback with guns blazing

The Punisher's back, and he's killing the competition. After falling prey to bad stories, failed revivals and whacked-out gimmicks, Frank Castle's staged the industry's greatest comeback—shooting, stabbing and detonating his way to the top of the comic world.

And the fans love every blood-soaked minute. The proof? Thanks to two printings and a bunch of cool variant covers, *Punisher* #1 sold in excess of 115,000 copies.

"The Punisher's a very easy character to get right," says Garth Ennis, who's teamed with Steve Dillon on the mega-popular 12-issue mini-series, *The Punisher*. "Vietnam vet, wife and kids killed by mobsters, hates criminals, turns psychotic, spends his life hunting them down and killing them."

But if it's so easy, how has the Punisher been so bad for so long?

He certainly didn't start out that way. Frank Castle burst onto the comics scene in 1973, a grizzled, skull-wearing, gun-toting vigilante whose "kill 'em all" attitude pissed off the otherwise soft-hearted superheroes of the Marvel Universe.

Over the next couple of years, the Punisher kept popping up guerrilla-style throughout Marvel's titles, often coming head to head with heroes who thought he was no better than the criminals he mercilessly mowed down.

Yet while Spider-Man, Daredevil and Captain America couldn't stand Mr. Castle, fanboys loved him. Skull-mania swept the industry in the late '80s and early '90s, with Punny supporting three ongoing titles (*Punisher*, *Punisher War Journal* and *Punisher War Zone*). In 1992 alone, Castle made 61 appearances in the Marvel Universe, almost doubling the number of times he showed up between 1973 and 1988.

That overexposure led to some bad gimmicks (turning Frank black, making him a woman) and finally pushed the character to suicide.

In a Marvel Knights mini-series a few years back, Frank actually took his own life and returned to Earth, as Ennis says, "a Ghostbuster"—an ectoplasmic bullet-firing, demon-hunting angel.

Ennis dumped all that garbage, and replaced the gimmicks with something much more effective—awesome storytelling.

"Given that the character was in a slump, it was pretty easy to come along and tell good stories about him," he offers. "I think the Punisher is always going to be an attractive character because most people respond to that sort of basic unpleasant human desire to solve your problems very, very quickly with violence."

Talk about violence: In the first issue of Ennis' mini-series, the Punisher exterminates at least 17 people, using Uzis, grenades and even the Empire State Building to cut down the criminal element.

Things only get worse (or is it better?) from there, as Frank'll find himself coming face to face with the Russian, a "man-mountain" hired by the Gnucci crime family to punish the Punisher; Ma Gnucci herself, the unseen head of the family, who meets with "an unfortunate incident at a New York City Zoo," in May's issue #4, according to Ennis; the NYPD's Punisher Task Force and a loose collection of overactive vigilantes (the Holy, Elite and Mr. Payback) who actually draw inspiration from his violent exploits.

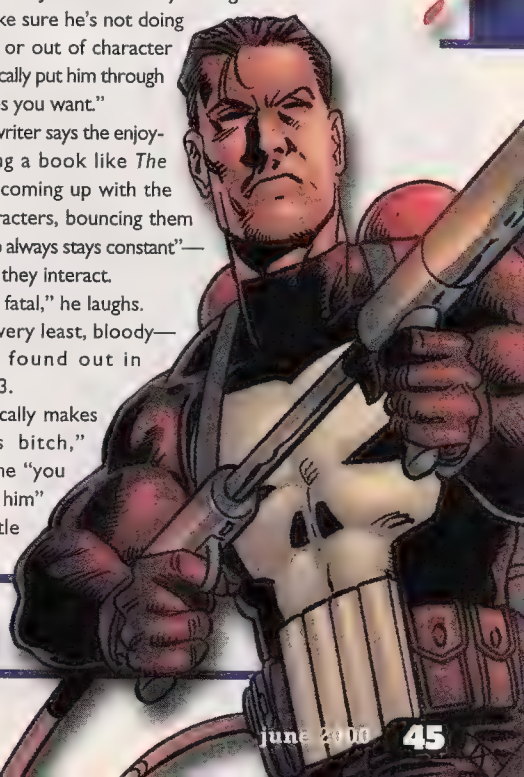
"It's simple when you think about it," Ennis says of the vigilante's comeback success. "Just make sure you've got Frank right. Make sure he's not doing anything stupid or out of character and you can basically put him through whatever stories you want."

In fact, the writer says the enjoyment in writing a book like *The Punisher* lies in coming up with the supporting characters, bouncing them off Frank—"who always stays constant"—and seeing how they interact.

"It's usually fatal," he laughs.

Or, at the very least, bloody—as Daredevil found out in April's issue #3.

"Frank basically makes Daredevil his bitch," Ennis says of the "you kill me, or I kill him" ultimatum Castle



by Christopher Lawrence

presents the horned hero. The Punisher shackles DD in chains, places a gun in his hands and offers the hero a chance to stop him from killing a mob boss. But DD has to *kill* Punny to stop him! Which code does he break and how does that showdown pan out?

The ramifications of Daredevil's decision will be felt in the pages of Chuck Dixon's *Marvel Knights*, a "non-team" team book featuring both DD and the Punisher in which Castle will use other Marvel heroes as pawns in his war against crime.

"It's quite clever, actually," Ennis says. "He [the Punisher] just sort of plays a cameo role from time to time to manipulate all these super-goofs into fighting for him."

Ennis is a big fan of Dixon's Punisher, and admits he looked to the first 11 issues of Dixon's run on *Punisher War Zone* for inspiration with the current mini-series.

In fact, Dixon would be Ennis' first choice to write a *Punisher* ongoing—should Marvel decide to do one—though he says he'd like to contribute.

"I doubt I would write it as an ongoing," Ennis says, "but if it became one, I would probably pop back from time to time, do a few issues here and there."

But will the Punisher's role in *Marvel Knights*—and any possible future mini-series—pave the way for another round of overexposure?

Ennis hopes not.

"I'd like to think that one good, solid-selling book would be enough, and Marvel won't have the character show up everywhere," he says. "If they just stick to their guns, concentrate on good stories and not f--- with the character, they should be fine."

Wizard Staff Writer Christopher Lawrence likes to punish the wicked by doling out really bad pink bellies.

WEENIE ROAST The Punisher's a big hit at any outdoors event.

SUNTHER BY DARYL ESTRANA/OUTLINE

ON THE REBOUND

SOME OTHER GREAT COMEBACKS IN HISTORY

X-MEN Once upon a time, Marvel's mutants were all but canceled, coasting on old reprint material in the early '70s. Everything turned around when the "new" X-Men debuted in 1975's *Giant-Size X-Men* #1, starring now-familar heroes Wolverine, Storm and the like. The splash this new international-flavored team made paved the way for their eventual 20-year industry dominance.

ALAN MOORE The man who redefined comics in the 1980s with *Swamp Thing* and *Watchmen* virtually dropped outta sight in the '90s to pursue other interests. He returned to comics with the low-profile *Supreme* in the late '90s, but it wasn't until the launch of Moore's America's Best Comics line for WildStorm/DC in 1999 that his star power exploded once again.

DAREDEVIL Except for small blips, like gaining a new costume in 1993, DD floundered after writer/artist Frank Miller left *Daredevil* for good in 1986. Seems nobody could give this Spider-Man wannabe the edginess he needed–and the Man without Fear began fearing cancellation. But the 'Devil had his day when the Marvel Knights crew joined forces with Hollywood writer/director Kevin Smith in late 1998, making the character hotter'n hellfire.

CHRIS CLAREMONT The last time this legendary *X-Men* writer hit the top of the sales chart was 1993's *X-Men* #3, his final X-issue. His X-ile ended with March's *X-Men* #100, firmly entrenching Claremont on comics' #1-seller, back writing the team that made him a star.

AVENGERS & FF By 1996, Marvel heroes like the Fantastic Four and Avengers sucked so hard, many fans stopped reading about them. But Marvel fixed that by hiring then-superstar Image artists Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld to reboot the heroes. Since late '96, the heroes have been Top 20 sellers.

GEORGE PÉREZ A superstar penciler in the 1970s and mid-'80s with *New Teen Titans* and *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, Pérez's star dipped for much of the late '80s and early '90s with work on low-profile projects, covers and inking-only assignments. That is, until his third stint as penciler of the latest incarnation of *Avengers*, which has thrust him back in the spotlight as one of comics' hottest artists.

WILLIAM SHATNER The Shatner is livin' large with his rockin' Priceline.com commercials. Captain Kirk raps–at least that's what we think he's doing–to such classic songs as "Freebird" and "Convoy." Heck, he even plays air guitar on a real guitar. (Guess those millions of shares of Priceline stock have made him giddy). We love ya Willie, now hurry up and go away already.

■ THE *WIZARD* STAFF

THE GREATEST quotes

"YOU'RE MY DOG, SEE? YOU BARK WHEN I SAY BARK, YOU FETCH WHEN I SAY FETCH. YOU ROLL OVER AND PLAY DEAD WHEN I TELL YOU TO. AND YOU GIVE ME INFORMATION. GOT IT?"
—PUNISHER, SHOWING HIS RYKER'S PRISON CELLMATE WHO'S IN CHARGE,
PUNISHER (MINI-SERIES) #1

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STRIPTEASE

VAMPI BY KEVIN LAU

UNDEAD AGAIN The beautiful bloodsucker gets a complete makeover, courtesy of Harris Comics.

WHO?

Vampi, blood-sucking superheroine.

WHAT?

Your typical vampire she ain't. Besides having a body to kill for, she's also got an innocent soul and a loving heart. For thirty years, readers have followed Vampirella's exploits—and marveled at her impressive cleavage—as she's tackled vampires, minions of hell, and other assorted baddies. "The original Vampirella was very much a representation of the zeitgeist of female characters in the 1960s," says *Vampi* writer David Conway. "She was the forerunner of the bad-girl trend."

But good looks can only get you so far. Vampirella's survived this long by overcoming her sex symbol status through strong (and often complicated) stories. Case in point? Her origin, which has been told a number of different ways over the years (one version says she's the sole survivor of Drakulon, a planet of vampires in another galaxy, while another version says she's the daughter of Lilith, an outcast from Heaven seeking redemption).

WHERE?

Vampirella first sunk her teeth into Warren Publishing in 1969, where her 112-issue run under Publisher Jim Warren was a shining model of consistency. Harris Comics revived Vampirella in 1991 with the *Morning in America* miniseries, and a new ongoing series followed. Other Vampirella series from Harris have included *Vengeance of Vampirella*, *Vampirella Strikes*, and *Vampirella: Death and Destruction*, as well as a bunch of crossover one-shots with characters like Pantha, Shi and Lady Death.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Writer David Conway and artist Kevin Lau will create a whole new vision of the character, with an all-new ongoing series entitled *Vampi by Kevin Lau*, coming this July.

"All the characters are new, the scenarios are new, the character herself is very new," reveals Conway, who also hints at a departure from the current horror/gothic flavor of the character to a more urban and gritty feel. The story will also be more continuous, unlike the fragmented structure of the previous string of miniseries.

"It introduces the character at the beginning of the book, but it's almost as if we come in during the third act, and what we're learning is act one and act two—what brought her to these points in her life, and why she's doing what she's doing. So really we're rebuilding the whole thing from the ground up."

BY RICHARD HO

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VAMPI'
KEVIN LAU • DAVID CONWAY
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MONK

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GOIN' APE From left: Joe Kelly, George Pérez, Kurt Busiek and Mark Waid.

KURT BUSIEK, MARK WAID, GEORGE PÉREZ and JOE KELLY swing into creator ownership with their new imprint GORILLA COMICS

By Christopher Lawrence

Emerging from beneath a vine-covered arch, four adventurers boldly enter the wilds of the rainforest. Exotic sounds pierce the mist-laden air around them—the rhythmic drone of the insects, the harsh, shrieking cries of the multi-colored birds, the relentless beating of the tribal drums.

A crash of thunder follows a quick succession of lightning strikes, and the boom echoes off into the distance, replaced instantly by the chest-pounding roar of a giant gorilla.

"Wow," Joe Kelly laughs in admiration. "That's cool."

Kelly and fellow explorers Mark Waid, George Pérez and Kurt Busiek marvel at the wild confines of West Nyack, N.Y.'s Rainforest Cafe, and—except for their total lack of khaki attire—look right at home amid the animatronic simians.

Why shouldn't they? After all, this jungle-bound quartet, when combined with fellow creators Barry Kitson, Tom Grummett, Karl Kesel and Mike Wieringo, comprises the Banana Trust, the board of directors of Gorilla Comics—the writer-driven company set to swing onto the comic scene this April as an imprint of Image Comics.

The Trust teammates are forging ahead with a mission—to get the monkey of corporate comics off their backs. It's a goal they'll accomplish by unleashing Gorilla on the market, using the first of the company's six titles—*Shockrockets*—to begin their rampage across the comic landscape.

"Somebody's gotta save the industry," Busiek says.

And who better than these guys?

Pérez, with 25 years in the industry, is easily the most experienced member of Gorilla, an artist extraordinaire whose ultra-detailed pencils now grace the pages of Marvel's *Avengers*.

Busiek represents the Trust's renaissance man, having worked in almost every aspect of comics, from sales and editorial at Marvel to his current gig as the mind behind *Avengers* and *Astro City*.

Waid, who redefined DC's Flash and penned the critically-acclaimed smash hit *Kingdom Come*, has more than earned recognition as one of the industry's finest.

Last but not least there's Kelly, the group's "junior" member, a title that seems admittedly odd considering his resume already includes both *X-Men* and *Action Comics*.

The roots of the Gorilla gang's efforts to save comicdom extend back over a year ago, to a situation that took place in the hallowed halls of Marvel Comics. Waid, at the time, was struggling with "editorial interference" on *Captain America*—a battle that eventually led

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

him to pull his name off the title with issue #14.

"I was foaming at the mouth," Waid says. "The final straw for me was hearing an editor at Marvel say to several people—and this is an exact quote—'We see writer-driven comics as an experiment that's failed.'

"To me, that was a sign of the apocalypse. I had to stop doing exclusively company-owned things and find a niche for creator-owned stuff."

Then came a call from Busiek, who was also hankering for increased control over his work—the ability to decide how his stories would be presented, to determine what kind of a life they would have beyond comics.

United by a desire for creative control, the two industry veterans hit the phones, calling "everybody" in comics and forming what would eventually become the Banana Trust.

Just like that, Gorilla was born.

Oddly enough, it's a somewhat familiar origin story. In the early 1990s, the Image Comics creators bolted Marvel to produce their own line of titles, and not unlike the Image guys, the members of the Banana Trust have created a separate company with separate funds and separate money to publish their books.

"It's a fair comparison," Waid says. "The one place I think the comparison falls down is that those guys were young turks who had all this energy—which is great—but they'd been in the business collectively for a week and a half.

"We're able to bring like 100 years worth of experience to the table."

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

The first byproduct of Gorilla's century of experience is April's *Shockrockets* #1 by Busiek, Stuart Immonen, Wade von Grawbadger and Jeromy Cox.

The six-issue mini-series tells a high-tech, futuristic action tale set in a world that's survived the ravages of an alien invasion. The Shockrockets, a team of heroic pilots, band together to drive away the aliens and protect the post-invasion society, using fantastic vehicles that are a hybrid of human and alien technology.

"They're the ones who save the whole city when the volcano erupts in the harbor," Busiek says. "They're the ones who fend off the military incursions from the former generals who've decided to carve out an empire in the new world."

Into that mix, Busiek and company drop a kid from Los Angeles, a teenager who becomes one of the newest Shockrocket flyboys.

"He's very much an outsider to this corps of very highly trained, very highly conditioned individuals, an almost military corps," the writer says. "Hijinks ensue."

May sees the release of *Empire*, Waid and Kitson's satanic soap opera. *Empire* follows the exploits of a villain named Golgoth, who's taken over the world.

"He's won," Waid says. "He's the supreme power of the world. The problem is, he's been doing this for about 10 years, and about two years ago, in a real Shakespearean tragedy sort of sense, he realized he didn't want the job."

With his ultimate ambition achieved, Golgoth's left with little more than mundane responsibilities like making the trains run on time, and tedious tasks such as keeping an eye on his back-stabbing underlings. "That's the problem with being the head gunslinger," Waid says. "The moment you're Billy the Kid, everybody wants to take you on."

In fact, it's *Empire*'s total and complete lack of "good guys" that makes writing the title such a challenge.

"This isn't *Super-Villain Team-Up*, with Captain America showing

BLOODY SHOCKING! The newest Shockrocket (top) needs Top Gun training, while Crimson Plague needs a Pamprin, thanks to her deadly period.

THE CREATIVE Quotes

"PAIN? PAIN IS LIKE LOVE, LIKE COMPASSION! IT IS A THING ONLY FOR LESSER MEN. WHAT IS PAIN TO DOOM?"
–DOCTOR DOOM, AS THE MONKS PUT THE NEWLY FORGED ARMOR ONTO HIS BODY, FANTASTIC FOUR *#278*

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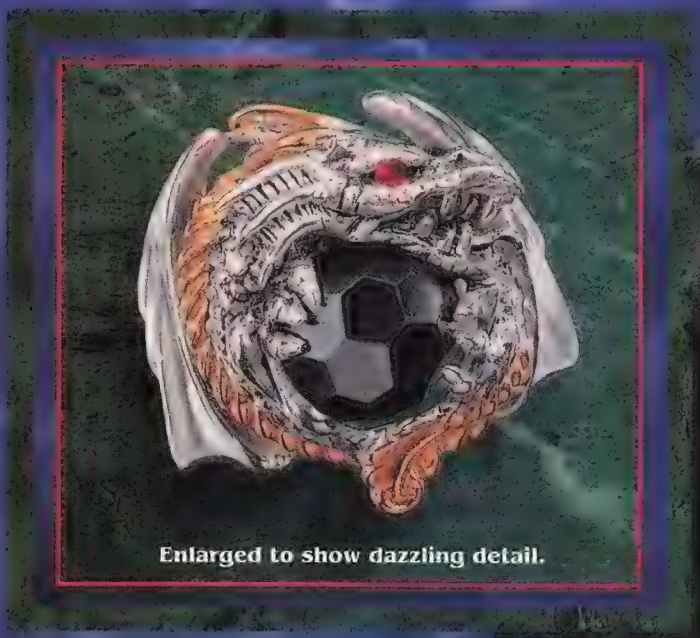

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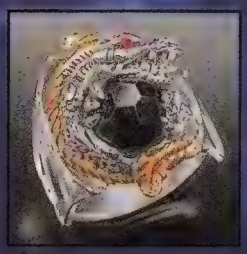

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up in issue five," Waid offers. "There are no superheroes in this story, it's just slightly sympathetic bad guys and less-slightly sympathetic bad guys."

Following *Empire* comes Pérez's *Crimson Plague*, which debuts early in June. Pérez considers the title a hybrid series, with science fiction, horror, action—and yes, superheroes—playing a part in the six, possibly eight, issues of the mini-series.

Crimson Plague tells the story of DiNA: Simmons, a girl found as an embryo inside a dead female miner on one of Jupiter's moons. She's brought to full womanhood within the course of five years, and scientists come to the grim discovery that DiNA's blood is at first toxic, then totally deadly, when it hits the atmosphere.

"Because she is a human female, the one thing that makes it unique is the fact that she goes through a menstrual cycle," Pérez says. "Once she does, it becomes an airborne virus, and thus can destroy an entire planet within the course of a day's time."

"There's the new tagline," Busiek chimes in. "The deadliest comic of Y2K. Period."

Gorilla releases a second title in June called *Section Zero*, by Karl Kesel and Tom Grummett. The title centers around a team of adventurers who challenge the fantastic, a Kirby-inspired group of heroes their creators say will "protect mankind from everything that doesn't exist."

"It's a book about a team of adventurers who drag things out of the darkness, into the light," Grummett says.

"It's exactly the sort of book we've always wanted to do," Kesel says of the series, which he describes as "Jack Kirby does the 'X-Files.' It has normal people against overwhelming odds, lost civilizations, monsters, mercenaries and dinosaurs."

Then, in July, Gorilla launches the second volume of *Tellos*, the fantasy/adventure title by Todd Dezago and Mike Wieringo that's currently being published by Image.

Tellos recounts the adventures of a young boy named Jarek, and his anthropomorphic (tiger-headed) mentor, Koj. In the second volume, the duo will continue to flee from an evil wizard, Wieringo offers, with the thrust behind the story being the mystery of why the warlock's pursuing them.

Finally, in August, Gorilla unleashes *Gigi and the Big Four*, by Kelly and artist Pascual Ferry. *Gigi*'s writer describes the book as "Freaks and Geeks" meets "I Dream of Jeannie"—the continuing adventures of four high school friends who cut class, stumble across a mystical being on the beach, take her home and keep her in the basement.

"It's high school male thinking," Kelly laughs.

Gigi eventually befriends the students, who do her the tremendous favor of introducing her to the wonders of high school.

"All the kids know there's something wrong with her, 'cause she sort of has horns and stuff, but the adults don't even notice. They just think it's a kooky hairstyle," Kelly says. "It's just like the cool, good times we had in high school, amped out with demons and psychotic genie girls and stuff."

While there are six titles in Gorilla's jungle, each book takes place in a different universe, a conscious decision agreed upon by each member of the Banana Trust.

"If I never see another comic book company start up with a shared universe again, I'll be happy," Waid says. "I really think that shared universes, especially with start-up companies, are such a crutch and so hideously overrated as a marketing tool.

"If I buy a book and find out it's part of a new line and a shared universe, I feel like they're just trying to con me into buying six books at once."

PEELING THE BANANA

Each of Gorilla's six debut titles will have a Gorilla partner working on it at all times, paired with some non-Banana Trust creators. Though the non-Trust guys aren't partners in the company, they're not being left out of the

MYSTERY MEN The heroes of *Section Zero* (above) will investigate mysteries, while Xanna (left) from *Empire* just likes killing things.

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"WHERE IS THE SATISFACTION OF RULING A PLANET OF AUTOMATONS, HMM? BETTER TO BREAK THEIR SPIRITS THAN ENSLAVE THEIR MINDS. BETTER IF THEY KNOW THEY HAVE BEEN CONQUERED."
—BARON ZEMO, DISCOUNTING THE FIXER'S PLOT TO RULE THE WORLD THROUGH MIND CONTROL AS OPPOSED TO FORCE, THUNDERBOLTS *#11*

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GORILLA WARFARE

So today's top writers (and a few artists) have joined forces in the name of creator ownership. Well, seeing as how the new Gorilla imprint bears a few striking resemblances to the creator-owned Image Comics, *Wizard* decided to stack the two of 'em up. Here's what we found:

IMAGE	GORILLA
LOGOS	
A giant "I"	A giant monkey **EDGE:** Gorilla
STEPPING STONE	
Launched with Malibu Comics	Launched with Image (ironic, huh?) **EDGE:** Gorilla
BLOOD TYPE	
Youngblood **EDGE:** Image	Crimson Plague
SHIPPING RECORD	
Disastrous	So far, so good **EDGE:** Gorilla
TODD-O-METER	
Todd McFarlane created/drew *Spawn* **EDGE:** Image	Todd McFarlane draws nuthin'
IMPRINT NAME	
All style, no substance	Big, hairy mammal that eats bugs and tosses feces around **EDGE:** Gorilla (hey, feces tossing is highly underrated!)
CLOTHING	
Rob Liefeld's Levi's Jeans commercial **EDGE:** Image	George Pérez's shirts
WINNER	
And in a 4-3 decision, Gorilla climbs its way to the top banana slot.	

creator ownership equation.

Not by any means.

"Stuart [Immonen] gets all the benefits of creator ownership in everything he and I create together," Busiek says.

And though the Trust members say they can envision Gorilla expanding in the future, they're not looking for additional creators just yet.

"We have to build a house before we start renting out the rooms," Busiek says. "I would love to publish some of Stuart's stuff that he wants to do on his own.

"Hopefully, we'll get Gorilla launched on a sound enough footing so that when Stuart wants to do that, we're there to publish it for him."

Until then, the Gorilla guys will stick to their tacit agreement to not consider expanding the company's creative roster. It's a pact meant to help Gorilla avoid the overabundance of new titles that have deluged comic shop shelves in recent years, contributing in no small part to the industry's decline.

"Eventually," Busiek booms, "we want Gorilla to be a gigantic colossus that bestrides the earth with its powerful hairy legs.

"But slowly."

So for now, the creative force behind Gorilla consists of the eight members of the Banana Trust, a bevy of non-partner creators and, in a somewhat limited role, editors.

"Everybody needs somebody looking over their shoulder," Waid says. "Even if it's just to make sure that you spell a word correctly."

"You need to have that kind of creative backstop where you can call up the editor and say [in a crazed tone] 'I don't know what to do,' " Busiek adds. "At the same point, the editor's available for that kind of thing without having the authority to say, 'I say you're going to do it this way.' "

Total creative freedom is, after all, the reason Gorilla exists.

"We want to do our own visions...without interference between us and the audience," Busiek says.

That direct connection develops a sense of loyalty, not between the fan and the title, per se, but between the fan and the creator. As such, Gorilla focuses on the creative talent behind the properties, rather than the properties themselves. Pérez openly admits that five years into the future, none of Gorilla's six launch books may be around, but all of the Gorilla partners will still be cranking out titles on a regular basis.

"We want, in 20 years, for Gorilla to still be there. It's our home," he says. "My goal is to die with an unfinished page on my drawing board, and I'd like to be able to do that. I'd like to have control of my destiny, so that I can continue working until I decide that I don't want to do it anymore."

For a complete Gorilla transcript, visit wizardworld.com.

I DREAM OF GIGI She's a genie in a bottle, ya gotta rub her the right way.

STOP THE PRESSES!

As *Wizard* went to press, Gorilla Comics announced that Joe Kelly (*Action Comics*) has left the imprint, which has severed ties with financial backer eHero.com and will be independently financed. For more details on the fate of *Gigi and the Big Four*, visit **wizardworld.com.**

PROTECTING MANKIND

FROM EVERYTHING THAT DOESN'T EXIST

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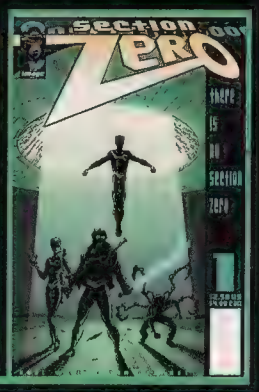

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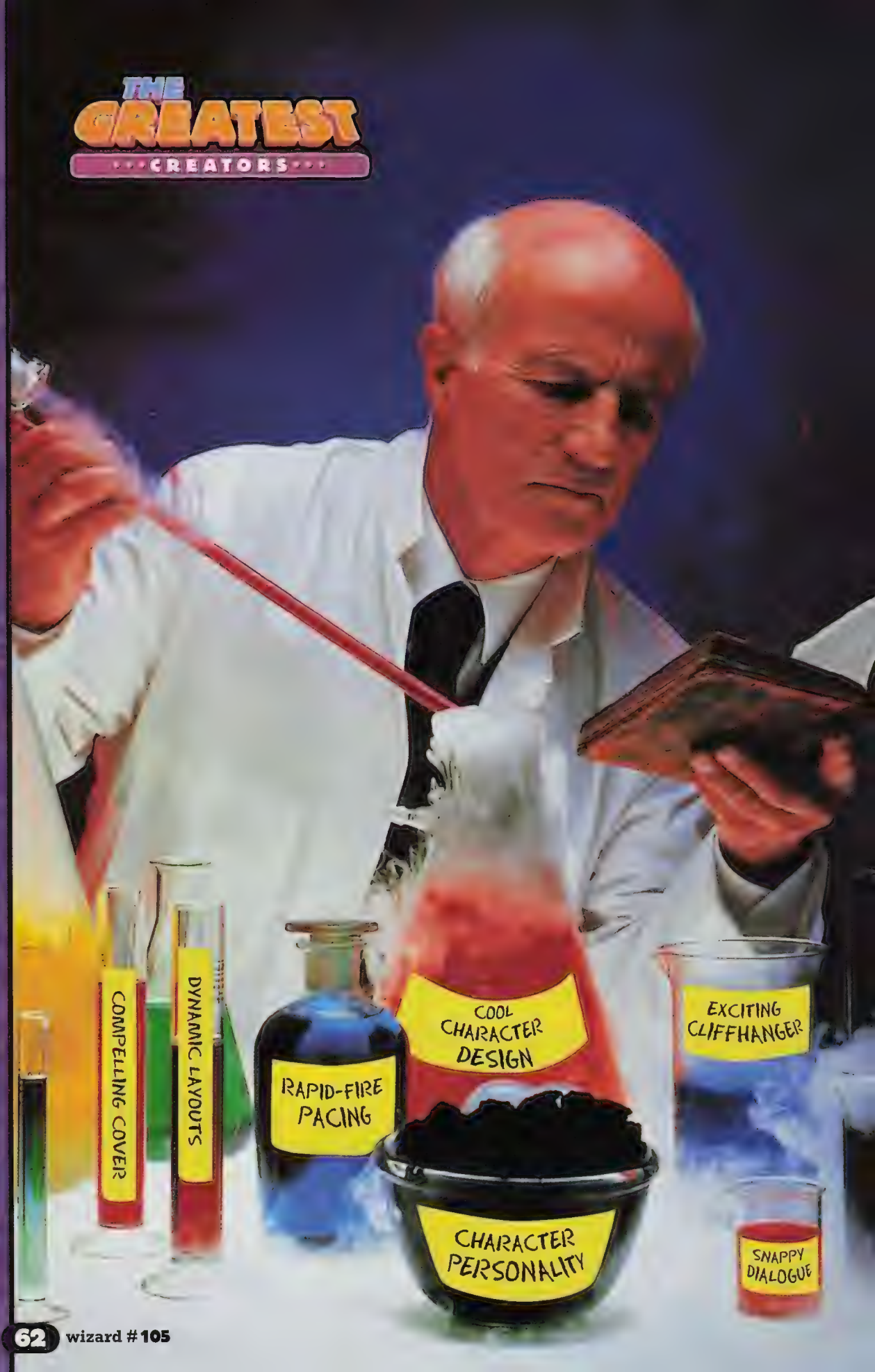

THE GREATEST
CREATORS
COMPELLING COVER
DYNAMIC LAYOUTS
RAPID-FIRE PACING
COOL CHARACTER DESIGN
EXCITING CLIFFHANGER
CHARACTER PERSONALITY
SNAPPY DIALOGUE

HANG TEN

Wizard ranks the 10 biggest creators of the comic book world

Meet the Mount Rushmores of comics.

These creators have chiseled their accomplishments in stone. They're the ones who carved out new ground with their work and left the comic landscape forever changed. They broke the rules that existed at the time, and left new rules in place. They transformed the scene with ideas and innovation, and inspired other creative minds to pick up a pencil and give it *their* shot.

If we sound a bit reverent when we speak of these comic icons, well...forgive us. Because these guys are worthy of reverence. We dig 'em. We love their work, and you do too.

These creators transcend labels like "writer," "artist," or even "storyteller." They're the pillars that comics today are built on.

by the *WIZARD* staff

10 KEVIN EASTMAN AND PETER LAIRD

CLAIM TO FAME: Creators of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, pioneers of the mass-marketed comic book creation

WHY THEY'RE #10: Before Todd McFarlane's "Spawn" empire came two average joes with a crazy notion.

Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird only planned a one-shot, black-and-white spoof of the popular comics of the early '80s–the teenage mutants of *X-Men* and the ninjas of *Daredevil*. But when *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* #1 hit in 1984, it sold out instantly. Then four more printings sold out. The duo's creator-owned, kitchen table operation–started with a $500 investment–became an overnight sensation, and the black-and-white small-press world *exploded* with hundreds of copycat books. Now anyone with a dollar and a dream could strike it rich.

Eastman and Laird struck it *very* rich. Suddenly you didn't have to be Superman to be merchandised–the Turtles spawned toys, movies, cartoons, Flav-R-Pops, sneakers and Kraft macaroni and cheese dinners. Eastman and Laird paved the way for independent comic projects to reach Middle America, giving creators more muscle than ever before.

EASTMAN

LAIRD

TMNT's RAPHAEL

OPENING PHOTO COURTESY OF FPG. EASTMAN PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI. LAIRD PHOTO BY AL ORTEGA.

9 NEAL ADAMS

CLAIM TO FAME: Groundbreaking artist on *Detective Comics*, *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* and *X-Men*

WHY HE'S #9: Adams invented a new school of super-realistic art. At a time when many comics still looked "cartoony," Adams' late '60s and early '70s work was a revelation: When the wind blew, characters' hair blew with it. Clothes actually draped on bodies. His sharply angled, in-your-face perspectives jumped with action that burst straight at the reader instead of simply across the page. Adams' characters seemed to *move*, as if his panels were a frame-by-frame motion picture playback.

Adams' grit and realism also helped comics stake out new intellectual ground. *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* and *X-Men* dealt with important issues such as drugs and racism, and people paid attention–even *Newsweek* featured these new "socially relevant" comics, because the stories looked and felt *real*. And Adams' darker takes in *Detective Comics* and *The Brave and the Bold* helped bring Batman back from the campiness of the '60s to his street-level roots, where he remains today.

Comic books sold on Adams' name in the credit box alone; he was one of the first artists to openly work for both DC and Marvel without using a pseudonym, because both companies wanted him so badly. "Superstar artist"? Adams invented the term.

GREEN ARROW

ADAMS

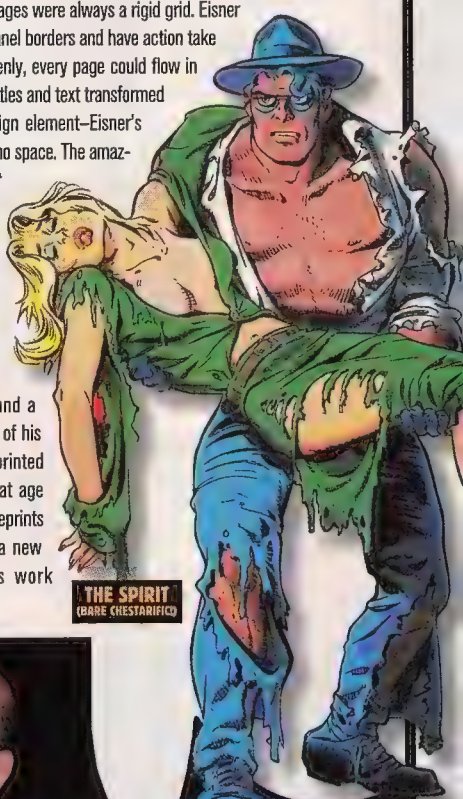
8 WILL EISNER

CLAIM TO FAME: Creator of *The Spirit*; comics' greatest innovator

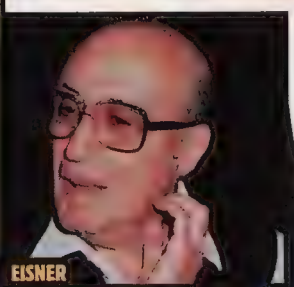
WHY HE'S #8: Never heard of him? Too bad. 'Cause Will Eisner is the Thomas Edison of comics–the greatest inventor the field has seen.

Eisner was the first artist to think outside of the box–literally. Before Will Eisner's *Spirit* in the 1940s, comic pages were always a rigid grid. Eisner was the first to break the panel borders and have action take place outside panels. Suddenly, every page could flow in a new way. Even the story titles and text transformed into a new, calculated design element–Eisner's unique page layout wasted no space. The amazingly clever design of *Spirit* splash pages made Eisner a real artists' artist, influencing generations of artists and making Eisner a world-renowned figure.

And unlike most other Golden Age artists who sold their works for a dollar and a dream, Eisner never let go of his creations, despite being printed by many publishers. Now at age 83, as DC publishes *Spirit* reprints and Dark Horse releases a new graphic novel, Eisner's work remains as vital as ever.



THE SPIRIT (BARE CHESTARIFIC)



EISNER

BOB KANE AND BILL FINGER

7

CLAIM TO FAME: Creators of Batman and comics' richest cast of supporting characters

WHY THEY'RE #7: Bob Kane and Bill Finger melded the fantastic with the authentic to give comics its greatest toybox.

Before Batman, the only superhero on the block was Superman–dashing, optimistic, and faster than a speeding bullet. Batman was the first lunch-pail superhero, a solemn cynic who showed that with brains, courage and hard work, a normal joe could hang with a guy who could bend steel. In creating one of comics' two most recognizable icons, artist Kane and high-school-buddy-come-writer Finger brought reality to superheroes where it didn't exist before.

Kane got the fame via a masterfully negotiated contract with DC that attaches his name to Batman to this day. But Finger, like Robin, was the unsung but indispensable member of this Dynamic Duo: He's credited with inventing Robin, the Joker, the Batcave, Catwoman and other Batman staples that have become the playground of hundreds of creators.

In creating the gloomy Batman, the twisted madness of the Joker, and the crime-ridden streets of Gotham City, Kane and Finger gave comics a very real–and dark–face.

BATMAN

KANE

FINGER

ADAMS, KANE AND EISNER PHOTOS BY AL ORTEGA. FINGER PHOTO COURTESY OF DC COMICS.

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"I'M COMING FOR YOU, YOU SON OF A BITCH. AN' HELL IS RIDIN' WITH ME."
–*JESSE CUSTER, AFTER FIGURING OUT WHAT GOD'S WEAKNESS IS*, PREACHER #49

6 ALEX ROSS

CLAIM TO FAME: Artist on *Marvels* and *Kingdom Come* who captures the majesty and the reality of superheroes at the same time

WHY HE'S #6: Even your mom would like Alex Ross' comics.

Folks who wouldn't reach across the coffee table for a comic book *will* reach for a Ross work–and they'll be mesmerized for hours. That's 'cause he's undoubtedly the best storytelling painter the comics industry has ever seen. Ross uses an amazing eye for color, shadow and detail to create shocking, double-take, photo-quality images that turn heads every time–he makes it all look *real*. His characters just plain ol' look like they exist in your life. Yet they always remain larger than life.

Not easy to do, but when Ross painted a hundred-foot Galactus menacing New York in 1993's *Marvels*, it looked, well…damn scary. When he drew Spider-Man, you saw the web-shooter bulge under his costume. Every nuance of Batman's armored costume in *Kingdom Come* looks authentic–you could build one like that.

Ross ought to know. He goes through painstaking photo references and often builds props himself–he's got that Batman costume!–just to get things right. His work looks like "the fine arts," a lofty plateau for a comic book. And right now he's comics' best chance for earning respect from non-comics fans–and for earning comics legitimacy on the world stage.

ROSS

'MARVELS'

5 FRANK MILLER

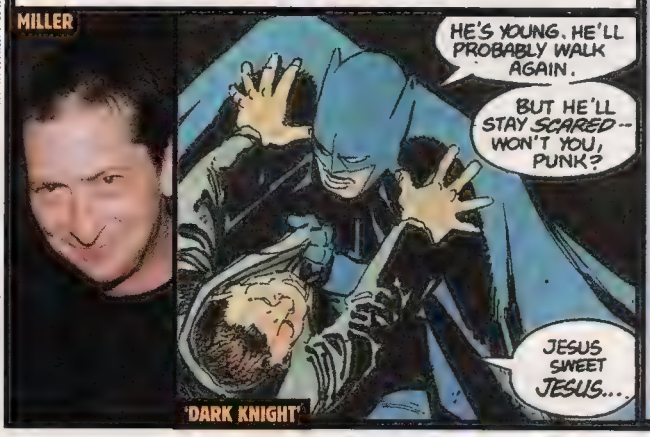
CLAIM TO FAME: "Grim and gritty" writer/artist of *Daredevil*, *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* and *Sin City*

WHY HE'S #5: Frank Miller dragged comics into the gutter–and found that everyone liked 'em that way.

Miller cut his teeth with a gritty, urban take on *Daredevil* in the early 1980s. His sparse, tense stories featured a hero who fought more mobsters than supervillains. Miller would often go on for pages without a single word of dialogue–especially in fight scenes, letting his pictures do the talking. Miller's combination of serious subject matter and amazing visual storytelling made him a star, and set the stage for a greater triumph.

When Miller's older, grizzled Batman re-emerged in 1986's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, he savagely fought fire with fire in a Gotham City that had become an urban nightmare. The toughed-up Batman caught the attention of fans everywhere, and even *Rolling Stone* magazine. A legion of dark, armored copycat creations sprung up. "Grim and gritty" became comics' direction for a decade, with even the bubbly, bantering Spider-Man turning brooding. Today, Miller has shifted his attention to a new arena: hard-boiled crime fiction in *Sin City*, where his experiments with black-and-white and negative space push a new artistic envelope.

Miller's stamp on Batman is still evident 15 years later. The bleak, industrial Gotham City seen in the "Batman" movies was inspired by *Dark Knight*. The dark, dead-serious avenger seen in the "Batman Adventures" cartoon? A throwback to Miller's "Batman: Year One" story. Don't be surprised if, in the next "Batman" movie, the Dark Knight Detective throws back his cowl to reveal the face of Frank Miller.



MILLER

'DARK KNIGHT'

4 JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER

CLAIM TO FAME: Creators of Superman, one of the most recognized icons in the world, and an entire genre

WHY THEY'RE #4: Isn't creating the superhero genre enough?

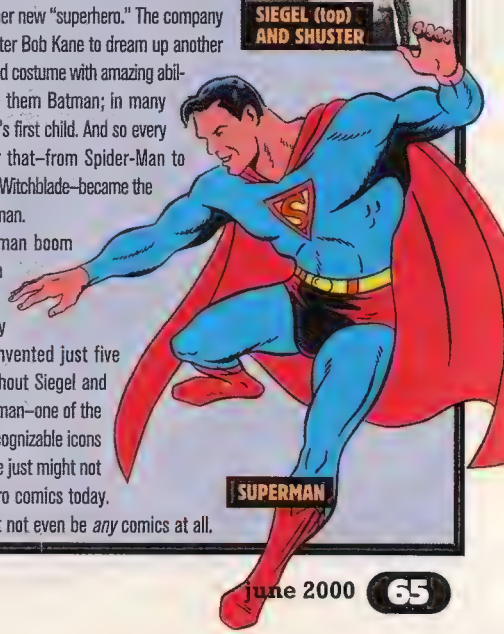
Even if it wasn't, writer Jerry Siegel and artist Joe Shuster would occupy a lofty position both on this list and in people's hearts everywhere. 'Cause they came up with the one hero that all others to follow would be modeled after. They created Superman, the first and still-most-recognized icon in all of comics.

No, they didn't create the hero. Plenty of heroic characters already existed in popular fiction, from the Shadow to Doc Savage. But Siegel and Shuster *did* invent the superhero. In 1938, no one in the world–much less comics fans–had ever seen a brightly costumed hero with amazing powers beyond those of the normal man. The "strange visitor from another planet" changed all that. And the world changed with it.

SIEGEL (top) AND SHUSTER

Superman proved so popular that DC immediately sought out another new "superhero." The company assigned youngster Bob Kane to dream up another character in a wild costume with amazing abilities. Kane gave them Batman; in many ways, Superman's first child. And so every superhero after that–from Spider-Man to Mighty Mouse to Witchblade–became the spawn of Superman.

The Superman boom gave birth to a boom in comic books, a relatively new medium invented just five years prior. Without Siegel and Shuster's Superman–one of the top five most recognizable icons worldwide–there just might not be any superhero comics today. And there might not even be *any* comics at all.


SUPERMAN

ROSS PHOTO BY GARY HANNABARGER; MILLER PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADER; SIEGEL AND SHUSTER PHOTO COURTESY OF DC COMICS.

DESTINED FOR GREATNESS

Some current creators might one day shoehorn their way into the elite company of this top 10. Here are the best bets from today's crop to make tomorrow's hall of fame:

KURT BUSIEK Writer Busiek just might go one better than Stan Lee: He makes the everyman a superhero. Busiek's intimate *Astro City* tales focus on average folks, affected by superhero battles they don't understand.

GARTH ENNIS The Quentin Tarantino of comics delivers high-caliber action and the blackest of black humor writing *Preacher* and *Punisher*. Ennis' flair for the bizarre has moved the line of what can be done in comics.

GRANT MORRISON The impossible happens every day in the mind of Grant Morrison. Comics' wildest writer makes the outrageous look ordinary, and even took the stodgiest of DC superheroes on surreal journeys in *JLA*.

J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI Creator of TV's "Babylon 5" and "Crusade," Straczynski has wowed comic fans on *Rising Stars* with his trademark epic stories and imaginative take on superpowers. You know he plans to go some place big—you just don't know where.

GREG RUCKA Heir apparent to Frank Miller, this *Detective Comics* writer captures the mood of a big city police department and Batman's moody, fast-paced action scenes perfectly—and goes Miller one better by adding emotional depth to Batman and his cast.

3 ALAN MOORE

CLAIM TO FAME: Comics' most sophisticated writer; author of *Watchmen*

WHY HE'S #3: Comics grew up under the tutelage of Alan Moore.

MOORE

Long considered "kid stuff," the face of comics changed when Moore brought an entirely new level of sophistication to the industry with his revolutionary work on *Swamp Thing* at DC in 1984. Taking the horror book to its most horrible extreme, he shocked audiences with a psychological terror never before seen in comics. Soon, DC was putting a "Sophisticated Suspense" banner at the top of *Swamp Thing* and going after an all-new audience–a mature audience.

Then in 1986, Moore dropped the A-bomb of sophisticated funnybooks–*Watchmen*, a twisting superhero murder mystery drenched in human emotion. Moore's complex, multi-layered story, dripping with symbolism and allegory, set a new benchmark for comic storytelling.

It's all about character with Moore. He turns any material, even the previously uninteresting Swamp Thing, into intelligent, mature, literary gold. Characters introduced and developed over a mere 12 issues in *Watchmen* seemed 100 times more real than familiar characters who'd existed for 40 years.

But hey, don't take our word that Moore has elevated the craft of comic writing. Ask college professors who have made *Watchmen* or *From Hell*, Moore's painstakingly researched comic about Jack the Ripper, *textbooks* in their classes. They'll tell you: Comics' premier writer is one of the greatest writers of *any* medium.

'WATCHMEN'

2 JACK KIRBY

CLAIM TO FAME: The most powerful, prolific, imaginative and influential artist comics has ever seen; co-creator of the Marvel Universe

WHY HE'S #2: They don't call him Jack "King" Kirby for nothin'.

KIRBY

Every line in Kirby's pages wielded pure power. From the time he got his first art job in 1935 at age 18, no Kirby character ever walked across a room. They'd stride or trudge or maybe leap, but they'd never do something as simple as *walk*. Kirby packed more raw energy into drawing than anyone, with characters that bounced off the page and threatened to poke you in the eye as they jutted out at you. By 1961, it was Kirby's explosive style that defined Marvel Comics, where he helped create the Fantastic Four, the X-Men, the Hulk and countless others. The Kirby style and the Kirby legacy is the foundation of the way all Marvel comics look. In fact, old Kirby splash pages from *Fantastic Four* are still passed around in Marvel editorial meetings to this day as examples of "how to do it right."

As an imaginative force, Kirby stood second to none. From the man-on-the-street heroism of Captain America to the awesome cosmic power of Galactus, Kirby had a hand in visualizing more comic staples than anyone.

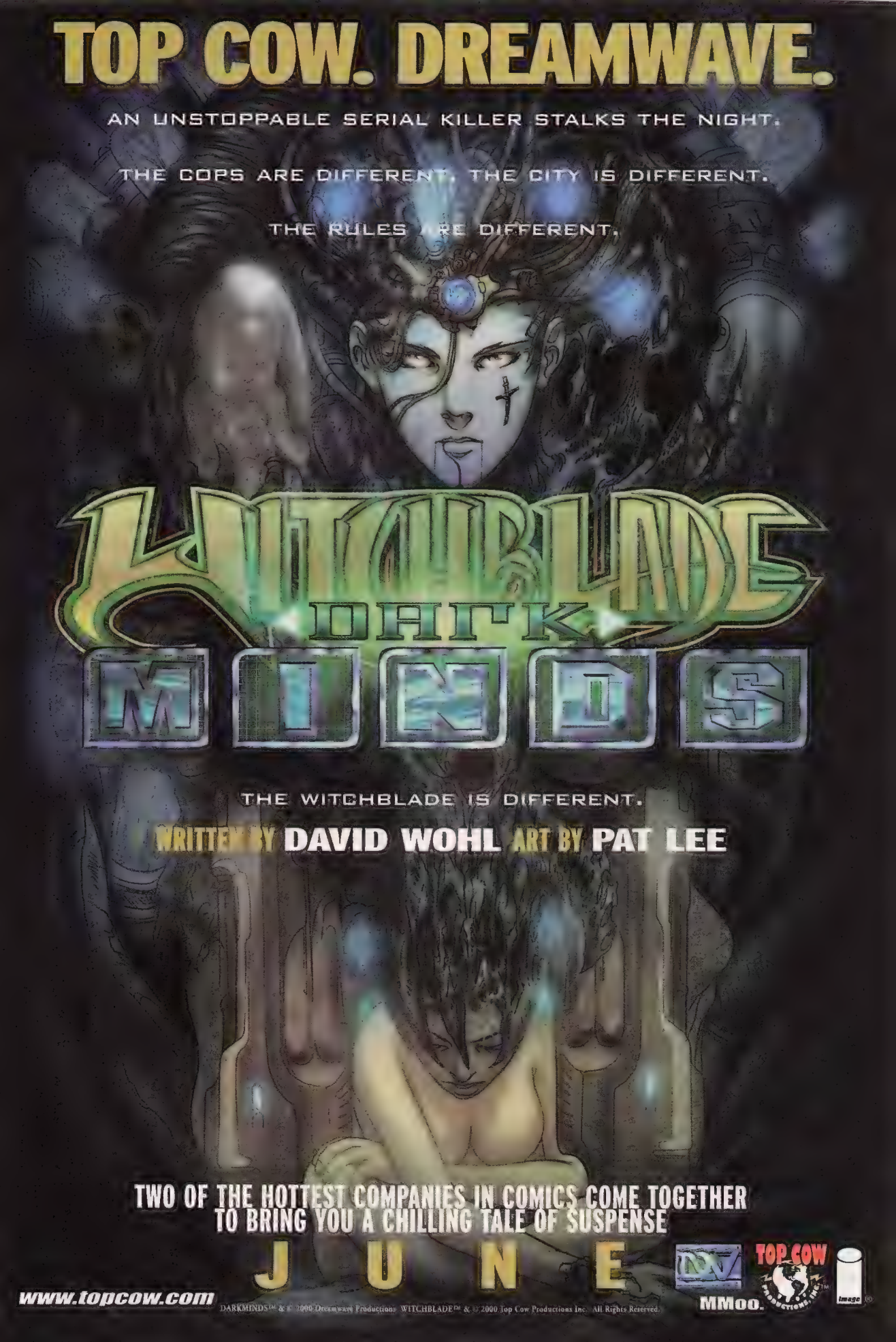
That's what happens when you have a career that spans over 50 years and 1,000 comics drawn. Everyone was exposed to Kirby. And maybe that's his greatest gift: Kirby's work has inspired hundreds of artists to follow in his footsteps.

THE SILVER SURFER

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"THOU HAST DARED MUCH, VILLAIN AND, VERILY, THINE HOUR OF JUDGMENT HATH COME!"
–THOR, AS HE ARRIVES AT THE AVENGERS' BATTLE WITH COUNT NEFARIA, AVENGERS *#165*

MOORE PHOTO BY BOB MARTIN. KIRBY PHOTO BY AL ORTEGA. BUSIEK, ENNIS, MORRISON, STRACZYNSKI PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI. RUCKA PHOTO BY SCOTT INGRAHAM.


TOP COW. DREAMWAVE.
AN UNSTOPPABLE SERIAL KILLER STALKS THE NIGHT.
THE COPS ARE DIFFERENT. THE CITY IS DIFFERENT.
THE RULES ARE DIFFERENT.
WITCHBLADE
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THE WITCHBLADE IS DIFFERENT.
WRITTEN BY DAVID WOHL ART BY PAT LEE
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1

STAN LEE

CLAIM TO FAME: Founder of Marvel Comics and the modern-day comic book

WHY HE'S #1: Heroes never had a heart until Stan Lee gave them one.

But beginning with his and Jack Kirby's monumental *Fantastic Four* #1 in 1961, Lee wrote the characters as if they were real people. The FF bickered among themselves. They got scared. They felt jealous. Each hero had his own, singular, unmistakable voice. And fans ate it up in droves. Lee's soap opera approach made heroes more human than superhuman, striking a chord that was music to everyone's ears.

"It's tough to say that Stan merely contributed to comics. Without Stan Lee, comics as we know them today simply don't exist," says Kevin Smith, *Daredevil* writer and "Dogma" film director.

"He gave a freshness and liveliness to the genre that gave comics new life. And that life is burning 40 years now," adds *Avengers* writer Kurt Busiek.

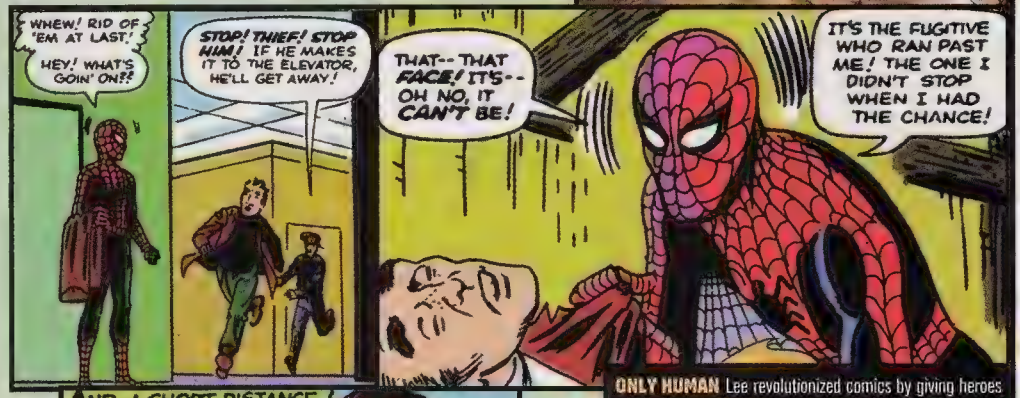
Seeing the success of *Fantastic Four*, Lee quickly dove back into the human psyche for more heroes. The Hulk, suffering from a Jekyll/Hyde schizophrenia, lashed out like a tantrum-stricken child. The teenaged Spider-Man wrestled with self-doubt. The outcast X-Men hid from a society that feared them. But together, they made up the richest stable of icons this side of Disney. And Lee told the world about them.

Lee wrote letters columns and "Bullpen Bulletin" pages in a laid-back, one-on-one style that made a reader feel Stan was talking to *them*. He did more then create comics–he created a lifestyle.

"Everything from the editorials to getting everyone on board as a 'True Believer' made you part of the greatest, coolest club ever," says *Thor* and *Captain America* writer Dan Jurgens.

Lee spread the word to the many: Readership on colleges picked up. Adults turned on to the tales, and Spider-Man became a globally recognized figure. And the impact of Lee's vulnerable heroes spread. Old stalwart DC has followed Marvel's lead, making old veterans like Superman, Flash and Green Lantern younger, hipper and more human.

"He created so many characters people just love," says Will Eisner. And so many more since have been created in the mold that he forged. Every character to follow the FF, Spidey and all the rest takes something–heart–from Stan Lee. The modern comic book is largely a Stan Lee creation, regardless of what publisher's logo is in the corner. So no matter what you're reading, you have Stan "The Man" to thank. W



ONLY HUMAN Lee revolutionized comics by giving heroes a heart, a quality that clicked with fans in a big way.

FANTASTIC In *Fantastic Four*, Lee focused less on the superhuman in favor of the human. The *FF* cast bickered, worried and even cheered each other on.

The Wizard *Staff officially thanks Stan "The Man" Lee.*

THE GREATEST Quotes

"MANY OF THE PEOPLE HERE KNOW ME, KATAR...I'VE KILLED A LOT OF THEIR FRIENDS."
–COMMANDER BYTH TO KATAR HOL, UPON DISCOVERING AN ALIEN HIDEOUT, HAWKWORLD *(MINI) #1*

LEE PHOTO BY JIM McHUGH

The Journey Begins...

Don't miss the three-issue prequel comic book series to this summer's most anticipated animated film from Fox Animation Studios!

TITAN A.E.™

On sale May through July 2000 • ***By Scott Allie and Al Rio***

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WHO'S DA' MAN?

'WIZARD' ranks the 10 characters that make comics great

By The *Wizard* Staff

You've heard the arguments before.

"Superman is the bomb!" "Batman's much cooler!" "Jesse Custer's got them both beat!"

In comic shops and basements around the world, fans constantly debate the greatest characters of all time.

Wizard decided to settle the debate once and for all, but our top ten characters had to pass a criteria like none other. The characters on our list had to have great origins, amazing abilities, a unique look, dynamic personality, motivation like no other and they had to stand for more than the average hero.

In essence, these characters couldn't just be important–they had to be trend setting. These guys aren't just powerful–they're phenomenal. Some characters make you read comics–ours made you *love* comics.

Finally, *Wizard* came up with 10 characters who shaped comics, who changed as comics changed and who without, comics wouldn't be near as cool!

Think you know who made the list? Don't bet on it...

IRON WILL Iron Man's mistakes, more than his triumphs, make him fascinating.

THE GREATEST CHARACTERS

10 IRON MAN

WHY HE'S #10: Iron Man's the ultimate flawed hero. And his triumphs and tragedies come from the tough minefields he's had to cross.

Sure, as Tony Stark, he's a billionaire industrialist with a brilliant mind and playboy looks. But this impassioned Avenger has made practically every mistake in the book: He's lost his fortune several times, battles the disease of alcohol addiction daily and even dated his teammate Hank Pym's wife, the Wasp, as Stark without telling her he was her fellow Avenger.

Want more? He once tried to lift a tanker trailer full of poisonous gas while drunk, risking lives. During the "Armor Wars" saga, Iron Man went on a rampage to reclaim his stolen armor technology. In his mission, he had to put down Avengers teammate Captain America, accidentally killed the Titanium Man and got booted off the Avengers.

But when you come down to it, Shellhead still deserves the "hero" tag. The "Armor Wars" quest only started because Iron Man felt personally responsible for acts of violence committed using his technology–so he shut every armored villain down. As for his drinking problem, not only is Stark stone cold sober today, he also sponsors fellow Avenger Warbird in Alcoholics Anonymous.

The ends justify the means for Iron Man. Heroic and selfless, he's laid his life on the line several times for the world. If nothing else, Iron Man proves being a hero doesn't make you infallible–just a very interesting hero to read.

DEFINING MOMENT: One more drink. That's all Tony Stark wanted. He'd sunk into alcoholism for months, depressed about his life: S.H.I.E.L.D. hovered on the brink of taking over his company. Evil Justin Hammer had taken control of his armor, forcing Iron Man to commit accidental murder. So Tony reaches for a bottle of whisky, hand trembling, sweat pouring down his brow, But he courageously caps the bottle, choosing to win rather than lose. (*Iron Man* [vol. 1] #128)

RECOMMENDED READING: *Iron Man* (vol. 1) #120-128, *Iron Man* (vol. 1) #149-#150, *Iron Man* (vol. 1) #215-#216, *Iron Man* (vol. 1) #225-#231, *Avengers* (vol. 1) #227

9 COMMISSIONER GORDON

WHY HE'S #9: Jim Gordon fights crime harder than any other hero out there–and he doesn't wear spandex.

Gordon isn't just a good cop, he's a supercop who patrols the dirtiest, meanest streets of Gotham City. But even surrounded by corruption, Gordon stands strong as a pillar of morality and honor. By going maskless, Gordon puts his life and rep on the line every day.

When Gordon first transferred from the Chicago police force, he was one of a few good cops surrounded by a GCPD lacking morals or respect for the citizens it served. But Gordon turned the department around from the bottom up after he personally laid a can of whup-ass on his jackbooted partner and got the old, corrupt police commissioner booted out of office–leaving him commissioner of the GCPD, in one of the most meteoric rises to the top ever.

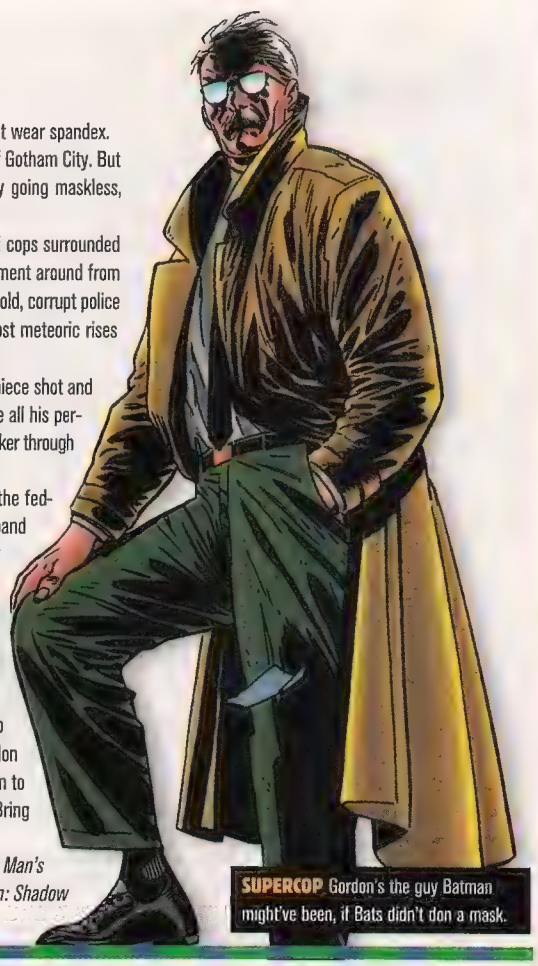
Gordon's reverence for justice and morality took some hard hits in Gotham. He saw his niece shot and crippled by the Joker, and his wife murdered by the same Clown Prince of Crime. But despite all his personal pain, he never compromised his indomitable belief in the morality of the law, and put the Joker through the justice system rather than take the law into his own hands.

Gordon's greatest hurdle came when Gotham became a "No Man's Land"–cut off by the federal government, chaos reigned over the earthquake-devastated city. Gordon, along with an band of trusted cops, took back the city block by block and eventually restored law and order where none had existed.

When it comes right down to it, Gordon's the man Batman could have been if he'd become a cop instead of a vigilante. Even though the Dark Knight works alongside heroes like Superman, Wonder Woman and the Flash, he only looks up to one man as a true hero–Jim Gordon.

DEFINING MOMENT: Kidnapped. Beaten. Tortured. The Joker has done all this and worse to Commissioner Gordon–he even shot and molested Gordon's niece, Barbara (Oracle) while Gordon watched. But when Batman finally rescues Jim, naked and bound, Gordon won't allow Batman to act on the very justified rage they both share. "By the book," he hisses to the Dark Knight. "Bring him in...*by the book*." (*Batman: The Killing Joke*)

RECOMMENDED READING: *Batman: Year One* TPB, *Batman: The Killing Joke*, *Batman: No Man's Land* Vol. One tpb., "Batman: Endgame" (*Batman* #574, *Detective Comics* #741 and *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #126)



SUPERCOP Gordon's the guy Batman might've been, if Bats didn't don a mask.

8 RORSCHACH

WHY HE'S #8: Rorschach showed us what it would *really* take to be a masked crimefighter–and it looked scary. This vigilante was uncompromising, paranoid and psychotic.

If he needed information, Rorschach went to bars and broke fingers to get it. When he found a serial killer, he burned him alive–and even killed his dog. Seizing his chance to get revenge on a midget mob boss, Rorschach flushed him down a toilet! The man didn't intimidate people, he broke them. Unafraid of evil, he bounded out of shadows to confront evil face to face. Rorschach didn't even back down from the atomic-powered Dr. Manhattan, the most powerful being on the planet. Let's face it–the guy's crazy.

Born the son of a whore, Rorschach tried to be a "normal" crimefighter, but a horrific case caused his vigilantism to take a dark turn. He refused to wash because it diverted him from crime fighting. He trusted no one. He obsessed over conspiracies and began calling his mask "his face." There were no more grays in Rorschach's world, only black and white. If you were not with him, you were against him–there was no compromise.

Rorschach looked scary, too–his mask, designed after the ink blot test given by psychologists, comprised the purest white and darkest black...which was perfect, since that's the way Rorschach looked at his world.

OUCH Rorschach gave comics a brutally realistic vigilante–one that's relentless and completely uncompromising.

DEFINING MOMENT: They had him surrounded. That's how Rorschach felt during his brief time in jail, where every other inmate–many of whom had been severely beaten and captured by Rorschach himself–wanted a piece of him. When one murderous thug threatens Rorschach in the lunch line, Rorschach pours a vat of hot, burning cooking fat over his face. "None of you understand," the schizophrenic crimefighter cries as guards drag him away. "*I'm* not locked up in here with *you*. *You're* locked up in here with *me*." (*Watchmen* #6)

RECOMMENDED READING: *Watchmen* #1-#12

7 MAGNETO

WHY HE'S #7: Meet the Malcolm X of comics.

Like the 1960s civil rights leader, Magneto will defend his people by any means necessary. But this mutant leader takes that philosophy to the extreme. Violently.

The master of magnetism, Erik Lehnsherr's beliefs stem from his childhood in a Nazi concentration camp when he witnessed how evil and bigoted man could be. Scarred by the belief that man would always persecute those who are different, Magneto decided to lead mutantkind in the upcoming war for control of the globe.

And if anyone gets in his way? Look out. When the X-Men tried to stop one of his evil plots, he ripped the adamantium right off of Wolverine's bones and through the pores of his skin. He mercilessly sank a Soviet sub killing hundreds to gain respect for mutantkind as a world power. He even tried to bully the United Nations by attempting to harness polar magnetism and shift the Earth off its axis! And the fruit of his labor paid off in the U.N.-sanctioned control of the mutant nation of Genosha.

If you think a guy who can only control metal can't rule a country, think again. His awesome power not only can move tanks around, but he can also manipulate the iron in a man's bloodstream, killing him.

Sure, most world conquers only care about themselves. Magneto, though, wants to see his people take their rightful place in destiny–with him, of course, in charge.

DEFINING MOMENT: Step aside for the mutant takeover. That's what Magneto told the world's leaders, as he ordered them cede total control to him and disarm all nuclear weapons–or be destroyed. When a Soviet sub foolishly attacked Magneto's island HQ, the Master of Magnetism short-circuited the sub's computers and sealed all the exits...sinking it like a stone. (*Uncanny X-Men* #150)

RECOMMENDED READING: *Uncanny X-Men* #112–#113, *Uncanny X-Men* #150, *Uncanny X-Men* #200, *X-Men* #85, *Magneto* #0

X-TREME PREJUDICE Magneto will defend mutants by any means necessary.

6 WOLVERINE

WHY HE'S #6: He's the best there is at what he does–and what Wolverine does is kick ass.

With a skeleton laced with an unbreakable adamantium alloy, a mutant healing factor that brings him back from the edge of death, razor-sharp claws and animalistic senses, the X-Men's scrappy pug fights bad guys with bad-guy rules.

A Canadian known only as Logan, he will do whatever it takes to win, whether he mauls Magneto in order to stop his world conquest, slashes Sabretooth to stay outta his way or even smacks Spider-Man in the kisser to prove a point. He'll get in your face. He'll punch you out if you get on his nerves. And if he feels someone deserves to die, he'll have no problem doing the job.

Sometimes he goes to far to do it, though. His uncontrollable "berserker rages" are legendary–particularly when fighting an equally savage opponent like the Hulk–and Wolverine wrestles just as hard to contain the ferocity inside him. He wishes he can search to his origins for answers to cure his inner rage, but his past is muddled in memory implants and haziness.

Though you may not know where he came from, he'll leave enough of a trail of busted bodies so that you'll always know where he's been.

DEFINING MOMENT: He was left for dead. That sums up Wolverine's predicament after being captured by the Hellfire Club and pummeled through five floors to a certain death in the rushing New York City sewer rapids. But up from the raging, grimy water he emerges with the prophetic, "Okay, suckers–you've taken yer *best shot*! Now it's MY turn!")

RECOMMENDED READING: *Uncanny X-Men* #132–#134, *Uncanny X-Men* #161–#167, *Uncanny X-Men* #172–#173, *Uncanny X-Men* #210–#213, *Wolverine* mini-series #1–#4, *Spider-Man vs. Wolverine* #1

OKAY, SUCKERS-- YOU'VE TAKEN YER BEST SHOT!

NOW IT'S MY TURN!

GET RIPPED Wolverine cuts to the bone by fighting bad guys with bad-guy rules.

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"NO ONE RIVALS DOOM! NO ONE!"
–A SLIGHTLY AGITATED DR. DOOM AFTER HIS YOUNG WARD KRISTOFF DARES TO COMPARE MAGNETO'S POWERS TO DOOM'S, FANTASTIC FOUR *#258*

5 SUPERMAN

WHY HE'S #5: Everything's a job for Superman. Whether it's a nuclear meltdown or a cat stuck up a tree, this guy's on call 24/7.

And Clark Kent's the only man on Earth up to the job. Never mind that mild-mannered reporter schtick. The last son of Krypton's the ultimate Boy Scout who doesn't just try to do good–he *lives* to do good. To do it, the Man of Steel wields the ultimate caché of superpowers. Super-strength, super-flight, super-toughness, X-ray vision–you name it, he's got it. To have a fraction of his raw power would be anyone's wildest dream.

But combine his abilities and sensibilities, and Supes' life becomes a 911 call practically all the time. Of all characters in comics, he remains the most driven. It doesn't matter if it affects his marriage, his job or even his health, Superman's always on call to fight his "never ending battle."

It wasn't always that way. At first, he used his for personal gain, winning high school football trophies and the like. But upon learning his alien origins, he wanted to tap his abilities for the benefit of all mankind.

It's a good thing, too. No other man in the universe could be trusted with the amount of power Superman possesses. But it all comes down to being raised by caring Kansas farmers who gave him a powerful sense of morality to match his super-abilities. And in the end, it's really not his powers that make this man super, but his enormous heart.

DEFINING MOMENT: Doomsday was here. As a hideously powerful monster–aptly named Doomsday–rampaged across the country, hero after hero fell in its destruction. As it approached Metropolis, only one thing stood between it and the city: Superman. But stopping the mindless beast came at the ultimate sacrifice. As Doomsday fell, so too did Superman. (*Superman* #75)

RECOMMENDED READING: *The Man of Steel* TPB, *Superman Annual* #11, *Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow* TPB, *Superman: For All Seasons* TPB, *Superman* #151-#157

BIG BLUE The Man of Steel's a one-man 911 for the world. And he always delivers.

4 CAPTAIN AMERICA

WHY HE'S #4: Superhero? Try super-*soldier.*

Sure, it was an experimental serum that transformed frail Steve Rogers into the pinnacle of humanity's physical achievement, but it's Rogers' mind and spirit that gave America a Living Legend. Cap's never-say-die attitude isn't just a mantra, it's his lifestyle. Whether it was fighting off Nazi armies in World War II, working with government S.H.I.E.L.D. agents to squash terrorists like Hydra or taking on power-hungry gods like Thanos or Korvac, Cap never quits. Never.

Besides a near-indestructible shield at his side, Cap's got the single greatest think-on-your-feet tactical mind in all of comics. Chalk it up to experience, stubbornness and years of training, but when a crisis arises, Cap's already putting out the fire. While other heroes sit around planning their next move, Cap's on the scene barking orders to his fellow Avengers. And some of those Avengers? They're gods like Thor and Hercules, who follow Cap without question. That's how much confidence and loyalty he instills.

But even without a superteam like the Avengers backing him up, Captain America fights like a one-man army. He's the ultimate soldier, able to take control of any situation. Will he kill? If necessary. (Remember, he's a soldier.) He may not like it, but if Cap's exhausted every possible angle, he will do the deed.

The American Dream come to life, Captain America spends every waking hour fighting for freedom. Superheroing isn't just a hobby for him, it's his job. And he takes his work very seriously. After all, he doesn't just wear the symbols of liberty and justice; he *is* the symbol of liberty and justice.

DEFINING MOMENT: He had to stop Thanos. As the mad god began his journey to kill half of the universe's population, Cap's team of Avengers fall one by one until only the super-soldier's left standing. Facing immeasurable odds and certain death, Cap looks the omnipotent tyrant right in the face and swears this is where his mad reign ends. (*The Infinity Gauntlet* #4)

RECOMMENDED READING: *Captain America* (Vol. 1) #247-#254, *Captain America* (Vol. 1) #332, Avengers #266-#277, *What If?* (Vol. 1) #44

ON THE MOVE Cap's "never-say-die" attitude makes him awful tough to beat.

3 DR. DOOM

WHY HE'S #3: He's the best man to rule the world. Just ask him.

Possessing a super-genius intellect, it's pretty obvious why the world needs Victor Von Doom: He could rule it better than anyone else. So what's the problem?

Doom himself, who could be the world's greatest hero if only he could see past his own unparalleled ego and vanity. This would-be world conqueror speaks of himself in the third person and records his every word and action for posterity.

But that ego pays off sometimes. Doom's had the chutzpah to take over his native land, the tiny European nation of Latveria, ruling with an ironclad fist. His armor contains more tricks, weapons and defenses than you can shake an Iron Man at. And his sorcery skills put him near the level of Doctor Strange, Earth's Sorcerer Supreme.

When Doom puts all of his weapons to the test, he knows no defeat–only setbacks. He brashly battled the Silver Surfer, former herald of Galactus, to steal the Surfer's vast cosmic power. He briefly sucked the infinite power right outta the Beyonder and into himself. Heck, he even fulfilled a lifelong goal when Doom connived the devil himself to release his mother's soul from Hell. Doom's only price: his mother's own love.

But Doom's not all bad. Or is he? Doom's political status may be that of a tyrant, yet Latveria's citizens love him for it. And not because it's the law! Maybe it's because he's proven his love for them equals theirs. Doom once dethroned an even worse dictator, 'cause his country deserved better. It deserved the best. It deserved Doom.

Quite possibly the most complex character in comics, Doom will find a way to win. Because he has to be the greatest. Because, in his own mind, he *is* the greatest.

DEFINING MOMENT: He would not accept death. It was for lesser men. But Doom fought onward as the omnipotent entity called the Beyonder dissected him alive, as punishment for Doom's attempt to steal the being's power. As his skin and bones fly away, Doom activates a secret weapon in his armor and sucks the Beyonder's power into his broken body. Remade, Doom sees his ultimate goal realized: he's the most powerful force in the universe. (*Secret Wars* #10)

RECOMMENDED READING: *Doctor Strange and Doctor Doom: Triumph and Torment* graphic novel, *Iron Man* (vol. 1) #149-150, *Fantastic Four* (Vol. 1)#246-#247, *Fantastic Four* (vol. 1) #258

KING DOOM He only wants to rule the world 'cause nobody could do it better.

CAPE FEAR It doesn't matter how powerful you are, Batman will find you and beat you.

2 BATMAN

WHY HE'S #2: He's a terrorist. Only he fights criminals.

It doesn't matter if it's murderers, rapists, arsonists, serial killers or even two-bit thugs–Batman will find them, beat them and make them piss their pants for good measure. His methods are so effective, Batman even terrifies innocent civilians.

To generate that fright, the Dark Knight Detective employs the only true weapon that can guarantee victory: his razor-sharp mind. With it, he will study, plan and observe to the Nth degree for any and every alternative in battle. And he'll win every time.

As a member of the JLA, that fact doesn't get lost on his teammates. Although bolstered by goliaths like Superman, Wonder Woman and Green Lantern, it is the team's non-powered strategist that could take them all out . . . and *they all know it.*

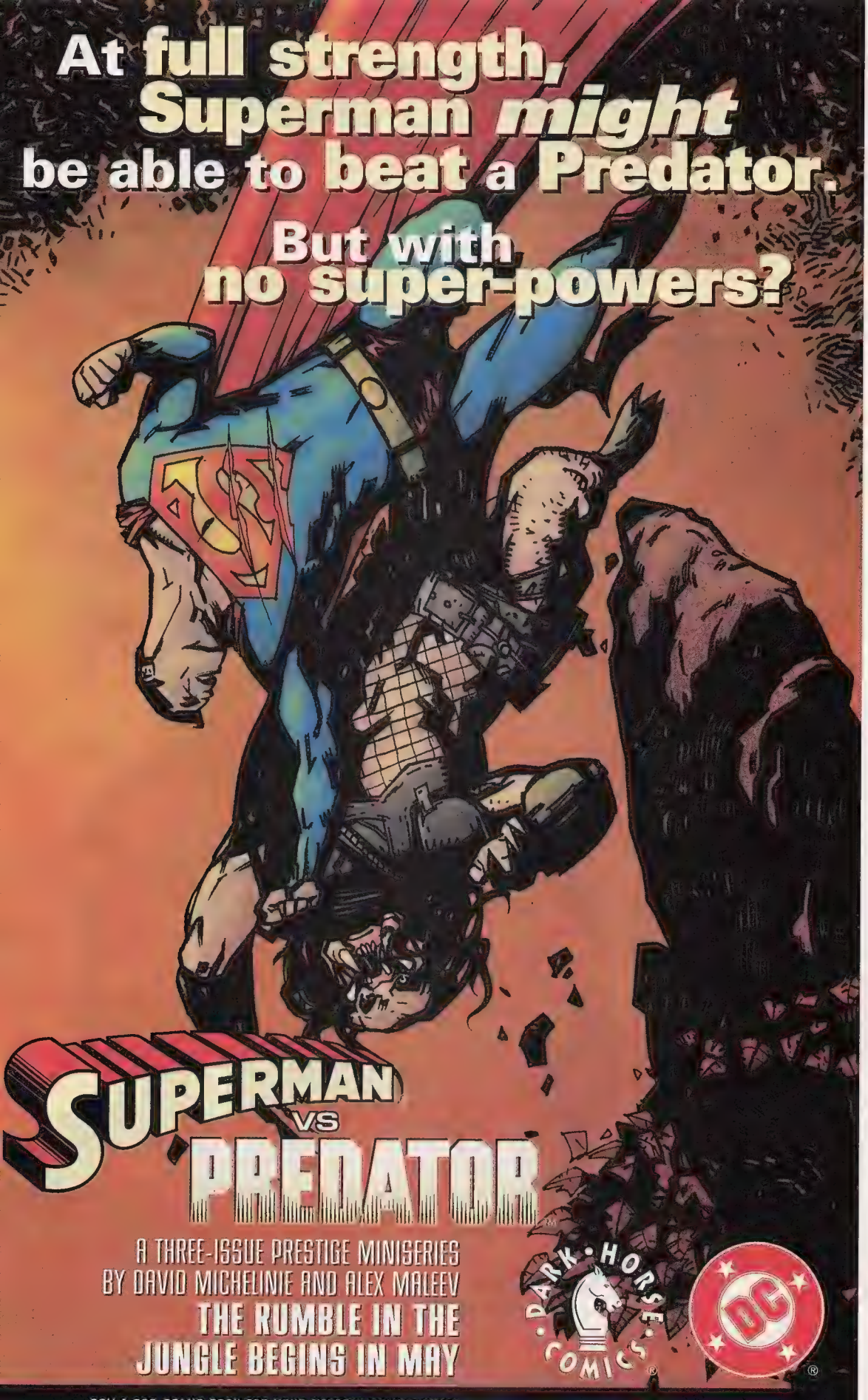
Batman's sense of preparation comes at a cost. While most heroes have a civilian life, there is no such thing for Gotham's guardian. For all intents and purposes, Bruce Wayne died when his parents were murdered in front of his 8-year-old eyes. Now that identity as a billionaire playboy serves as little more than a facilitator to keep Batman operating. And though Batman rarely suffers setbacks, he has lost much during his one-man war. He has very few close friends, and has seen some murdered (like the second Robin) or crippled (like Batgirl).

But the war rages on. And Batman plans to end it–one criminal at a time.

DEFINING MOMENT: Can the world's most powerful being beat its cleverest fighter? Wearing high-tech armor, Batman takes on Superman, now a tool of the White House ordered to take the Dark Knight out. With Green Arrow as backup, firing a synthetic Kryptonite arrow designed by Batman, the Man of Steel reels. "I want you to remember, Clark," Batman thinks to himself. "I want you to remember the one man that *beat* you..." And the Kryptonian falls. As does the Dark Knight. (*Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* #4)

RECOMMENDED READING: *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* TPB, *Batman: Year One* TPB, *Batman: The Killing Joke*, *Batman: The Long Halloween* TPB, *Man of Steel* #4

"I'M SORRY I FAILED YOU. THE WAR ENDS HERE."
–CAPTAIN AMERICA, AS HE SNAPS THE SKULL'S NECK IN ORDER TO BREAK HIS MIND CONTROL, EARTH X *#11*



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THE GREATEST SUPER-TEAMS

5. X-MEN

Feared and hated by the world they're sworn to protect, the X-Men made life as outcasts cool. As followers of Professor Charles Xavier's dream of peaceful coexistence between man and mutant, this super-team are students first, heroes second.

4. LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES

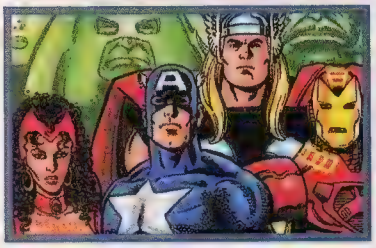
It ain't called a legion for nothing. With more raw numbers than any other team in the history of comics, this 30th century cosmic police force offers the most diverse team in comics history. If you think having heroes from other countries is wild...the Legion has members from other *planets*.

3. FANTASTIC FOUR

This team's a cool family you wish you had. Mister Fantastic's the super-genius dad and husband who tells interactive bedtime stories with his stretchy body. The motherly Invisible Woman's the glue that keeps the team together. The hotheaded Human Torch plays both the goof-ball prankster and celebrity stud. And that monstrous Thing is the lovably gruff uncle who'd letcha stay up past your bedtime.

2. JLA

Super-team? Try *force of nature*. The most powerful group in comics, the JLA's not quite a true team, but rather a collection of individuals who come together when a threat's more than any individual can tackle. The only thing keeping them outta the #1 slot? Unlike many teams, these guys do their business to save the world and then go their separate ways.



1. THE AVENGERS

Earth's Mightiest Heroes make up the team you wish you were a part of. This team ain't just about putting the kibosh on some world threat. It's about being a part of a group who enjoy the synergy and camaraderie of teamwork, even after the bad guys have been beaten. Chat up strategy with Cap, drink a big mug of mead with Thor, crash at Avengers Mansion or hit on Scarlet Witch. Ever wonder why Jarvis never looked for another job? It ain't the money. It's the chance to serve the very best superheroes in the world that keeps him making up those tasty sandwiches. ■

1 SPIDER-MAN

WHY HE'S #1: Spider-Man's the character you'd be if you put on tights.

Peter Parker's alter-ego revolutionized comics because this everyman hero endured problems that anyone could empathize with. And we're not talkin' a bout with acne. A typical day in Spidey's life would include standing up a promising first date, getting grief from his boss over work production and leaving schoolwork undone all 'cause the Scorpion hit town and needed stopping. And after a hard day's work, Pete comes home to an empty refrigerator, a pile of unpaid bills and a closet full of dirty laundry.

A hard-luck hero, Spidey came by his powers by the fluke bite from a radioactive spider. Originally he used his spider-like powers for fame and a quick buck–after all, wouldn't you? But it all fell apart when he failed to stop a mugger, who later that night murdered Peter's own uncle. Pete learned the toughest of lessons: with great power must come great responsibility.

The unhappy endings didn't stop there. His Aunt May's health steadily declined. As Spider-Man, he made mistakes, like illegally tagging along on an Avengers mission–and getting reamed by Captain America as a result. He lost his temper sometimes, like when he beat the bejeezus outta the Green Goblin and almost took it too far. Even when his costume got torn (and it happened an awful lot), Pete hadda sew it himself! And what was worse, Peter could never confide in anyone the burdens of his secret life.

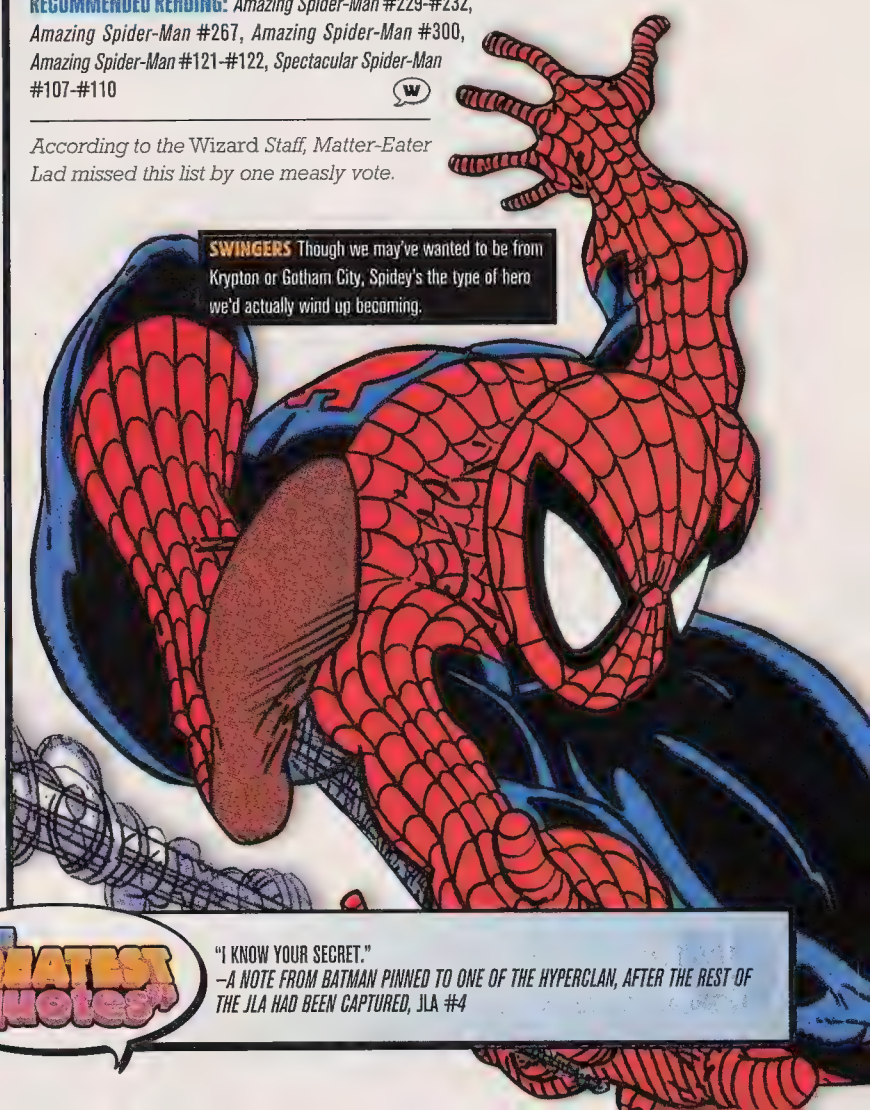
But Pete never let his bad luck get him down. Always an optimist, he always believes things couldn't get any worse. (Even though they usually do.) It helps, too, that his sense of humor's among the funniest in comics. His witticisms behind the Spidey mask bring out the best of Peter, needling his opponents to a frustrated and frazzled defeat.

All in all, Spider-Man's not just the hero we'd probably be. He's the guy you would want to call...friend.

DEFINING MOMENT: After giving his Aunt May a transfusion, Spider-Man realizes his radioactive blood is killing her. After finding an antidote, Spidey's trapped under tons of falling steel by the Master Planner. With everything against him and his entire body in pain, Spidey keeps fighting and eventually lifts the enormous weight trapping him. No other story shows Peter's dedication to his Aunt more than this issue. (*Amazing Spider-Man* #33)

RECOMMENDED READING: *Amazing Spider-Man* #229-#232, *Amazing Spider-Man* #267, *Amazing Spider-Man* #300, *Amazing Spider-Man* #121-#122, *Spectacular Spider-Man* #107-#110

According to the Wizard *Staff, Matter-Eater Lad missed this list by one measly vote.*



SWINGERS Though we may've wanted to be from Krypton or Gotham City, Spidey's the type of hero we'd actually wind up becoming.

THE GREATEST quotes

"I KNOW YOUR SECRET."
–A NOTE FROM BATMAN PINNED TO ONE OF THE HYPERCLAN, AFTER THE REST OF THE JLA HAD BEEN CAPTURED, JLA #4

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X posé

Comics' hottest franchise hits the screen July 14 and 'WIZARD' interviews several 'X-Men' makers for the lowdown

BY CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE

The heat surrounding the "X-Men" movie could melt asbestos.

It's safe to say there hasn't been this much anticipation concerning a comic book movie since Warner Bros.' 1989 release of "Batman." Fans are clamoring for *any* scrap of information about the flick: plot tidbits, costume designs, special effects scoops or even how long it took Rebecca Romijn-Stamos to get painted blue in all her scantily clad glory.

But like the old saying goes, if you want the real story, get it from the horse's mouth.

So in an effort to get the *real* story, *Wizard* trekked up to the near-frozen tundra of Toronto, Canada to talk to a number of the ponies in the "X-Men" stable and get the real scoop on what's gonna make "X-Men" the movie thoroughbred of 2000.

BRYAN SINGER

DIRECTOR'S CUT Singer had his eye on the Beast, and may tap the blue-furred mutant for a sequel.

Bryan Singer steps quickly into a warehouse on the old Gooderham & Worts distillery lot, his hunched shoulders marking his (undoubtedly futile) attempt to ward off the bitter Toronto cold.

The remnants of snow falling outside glisten on his zippered fleece sweater as he makes his way to "the hot seat," the red-and-gray plastic chair from which he'll discuss his most ambitious project to date—"X-Men," this summer's $75-million mutant extravaganza.

At first glance, Singer looks incredibly young for his 34 years. In fact, with his curly brown hair, thin build and closely cropped goatee, you'd be more likely to peg him as a college student than an A-list Hollywood director.

Make no mistake about it, though, Singer's filmmaking credentials are darned impressive. A graduate of the University of Southern California's cinema school, Singer helmed 1993's Sundance Award winning "Public Access," the critically acclaimed "The Usual Suspects" in 1995 and 1998's "Apt Pupil."

Now, with mutant mania at a near fever-pitch, Singer's ready to bring to life the biggest franchise in comic book history.

WIZARD: Is it hard taking such extraordinary—and extraordinarily popular—characters and making them real?

SINGER: The great thing about the X-Men characters, as larger than life as they seem, no matter how enormously, impossibly huge their bodies are—at

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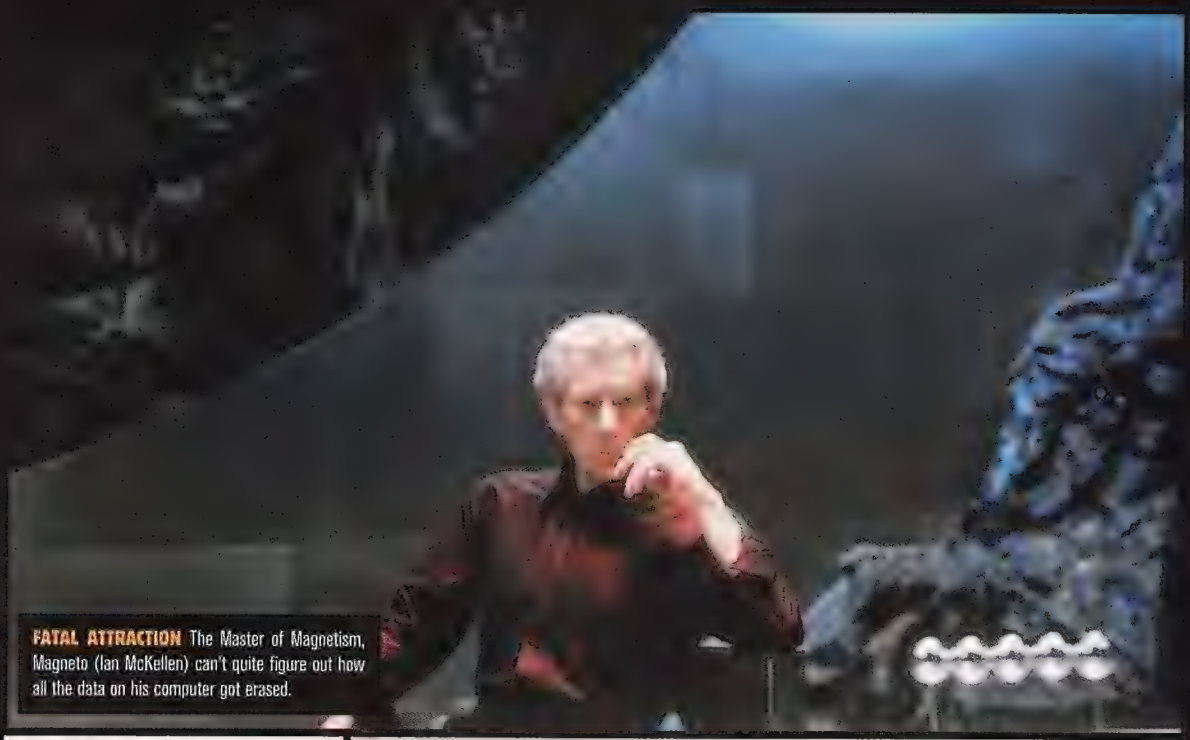
THE GREATEST QUOTES

"I'M THE BEST THERE IS AT WHAT I DO. BUT WHAT I DO ISN'T VERY NICE."
—WOLVERINE, THINKING TO HIMSELF AS HE CLIMBS THE CANADIAN ROCKIES, WOLVERINE *(MINI-SERIES) #1*

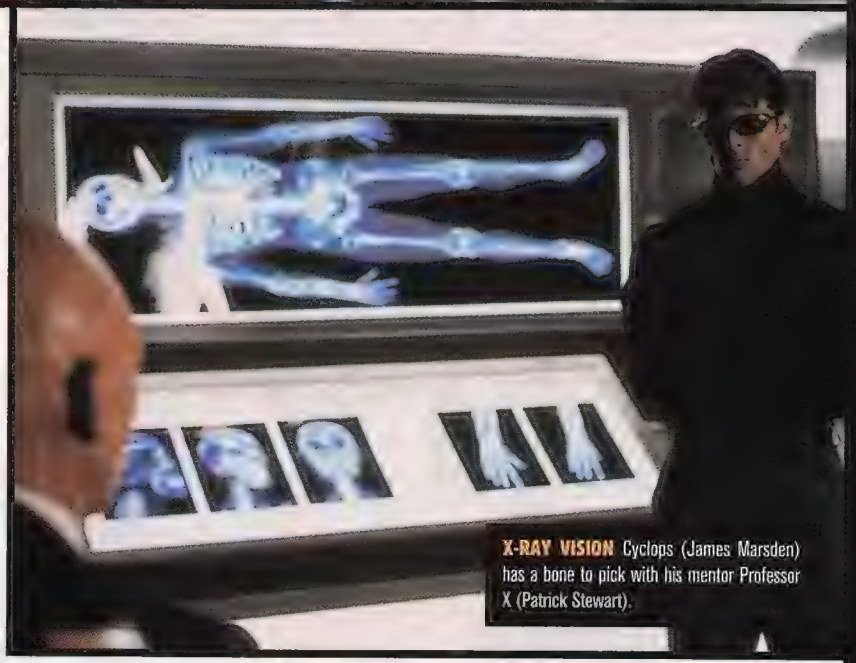


FATAL ATTRACTION The Master of Magnetism, Magneto (Ian McKellen) can't quite figure out how all the data on his computer got erased.

the core, the essence of their characters is very specific. That's what I look to capture. It doesn't mean they don't have extraordinary powers, and it doesn't mean there's not an action spectacle, but at the same time, they're still human beings. They're still mortals.

Which version of the X-Men will we be seeing in the film?

The X-Men have gone through so many incarnations. My favorite was X-Factor. X-Factor did a "Usual Suspects" type of thing, pretending to be something they weren't. [*Editor's note: The five original X-Men once formed X-Factor and pretended to be normal humans that hunted mutants in an effort to seek them out.*] They've gone through everything, from the early Stan Lee to *Marvels* to the way these characters have been portrayed by some of the more aggressive artists. There are ways to interpret this film that are quite dark. And there are ways that are quite light. I think I've chosen the middle ground.



X-RAY VISION Cyclops (James Marsden) has a bone to pick with his mentor Professor X (Patrick Stewart).

How'd you come to your vision of the X-Men?

First, I got character biographies of all the characters and their histories, and the histories of their relationships with one another. Then I started reading the comics and graphic novels, mostly because it was prior to a meeting I had with Marvel and 20th Century Fox, and I just wanted to acclimate myself with their universe.

Then I had extensive meetings with Stan Lee, Avi Arad and my partner, Tom DeSanto, who's been a huge fan for years. He knew the universe intimately, so he could educate me. Then I sat down and watched all 77 of the animated series episodes. We just kept doing that kind of thing.

So after all that research, who are the X-Men to you?

Reluctant superheroes who defend a world that hates them and fears them.

You've gone on the record saying you're not a huge comic fan—why'd you agree to do this movie?

Not for the money. [*Laughs*]

Because when I finally started understanding what the X-Men were about, and after my first encounters with the Marvel people, I became really intrigued with it...with the philosophy, the characters, the relationships with the characters and the ideology of the universe. It's very sophisticated, very interesting, and it doesn't seem strange at all that it's survived and remained so popular for 38 years.

SILENT BUT DEADLY

Rebecca Romijn-Stamos talks about Mystique till she's blue in the face

You've seen her on the beach, MTV and NBC's "Just Shoot Me," but you've never seen Rebecca Romijn-Stamos on the big screen–at least not like this.

The supermodel-actress, who plays the blue-skinned Mystique in this summer's "X-Men," recently took part in a Q&A held on the official "X-Men" movie Website (www.xmenthemovie.com). Here's what she had to say about playing the villainous, shape-shifting mutant:

ROMIJN-STAMOS

WIZARD: How'd you get the role? Did the "X-Men" folks just offer it to you, or did you have to audition?

ROMIJN-STAMOS: I had to audition for this. I don't have much dialogue…I'm silent, but deadly.

Apart from "deadly," how would you describe your character?

She's a bad girl through and through. She's evil to the core, I think. Mystique is the poser in the movie–she morphs into different characters.

I love the idea of playing a bad ass. A glorious Smurf! An evil one.

You mentioned the morphing sequences–how is that portrayed in the movie?

I think that's a whole lot of CGI I don't understand. I had to match other actor's poses and positions, which was hard, actually. I had to match people's staggers and movements.

In the comic, Mystique wears…

I know. The original Mystique wears a white, flowing gown, but it would be hard to morph into another character if she's wearing clothes. Sex sells! Blue boobs sell! Bryan's hoping a lot of teenage boys will come see it.

So you're not wearing any clothes?

I'm not naked, okay? Let's get that straight. I was covered in prosthetics.

Think it'd bother you to be called a mutant?

No, because I think mutant in "X-Men" has negative and positive terms. There are good mutants and bad mutants–just like supermodels. ■CL

You've got 11 major characters in "X-Men." Is it tough handling such a large cast?

Very. Ultimately, you have to focus on certain characters, but that's part of it—that's okay.

In the next movie, some other character gets their day in the sun and the Danger Room gets built and other characters that I miss terribly, that I wish I could have had in this picture, get to show up.

Like who?

The Beast. I very much would have loved to have had that character. I like [*pauses, makes a motion like he's dealing cards*] Gambit. Nightcrawler's cool. Then there's villains that are just one after another, that are great. And my favorite mutant of all is Proteus.

I've become a fan in the past three years, by the way. It's been three years since I didn't know that sort of thing.

So you got into the comic, then—who's your favorite character?

Xavier. [*Pauses*] Xavier and Magneto, because they're both in charge. [*Laughs*]

You've described Xavier and Magneto as two men cut from similar cloths who go in different directions. Is one of their directions wrong?

Wrong? Yes. Magneto's is wrong. It's threatening to life and peace. He believes a war is coming. There's no necessity for that belief, and there's no sense in perpetuating that belief, but he's been scarred by the past.

So you'll be touching on the whole anti-mutant sentiment aspect?

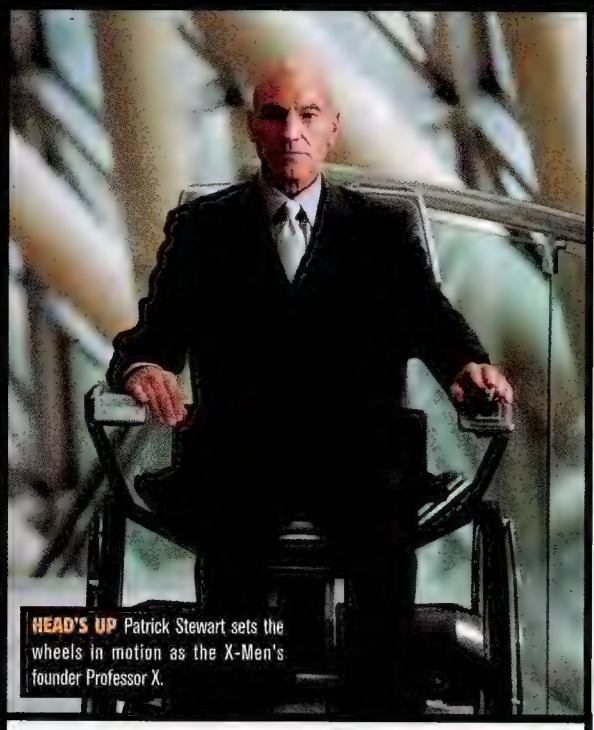
It's the state of the world at this moment. It's there, we start to deal with it. Some people, some right-wing senators have certain opinions about it, other people are sort of letting it go, other people…it's where we'd be on any issue.

I love the beginning of the "Magneto War" story [in *X-Men* #85]. Magneto comes down and talks to this construction worker. The night before, he took this building and flipped it upside down.

UNWELCOME WAGON Senator Kelly (Bruce Davison) greets his fellow mutant-hating supporters. And remember, kids–the only good mutant is a dead mutant.

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"TO SAVE MILLIONS OF LIVES, I WOULD TRACK THE CHILD DOWN AT HIS HOME AND SMOTHER HIM WHERE HE LAY. THEN I WOULD DESTROY HIS FAMILY…HIS FAMILY'S FAMILY…I WOULD RAZE AN ENTIRE CITY TO THE GROUND, AND SCOUR HIS ASHES FROM THE EARTH!"
–MAGNETO, WHEN ASKED WHAT HE'D DO IF GIVEN THE CHANCE TO KILL HITLER AS A CHILD, X-MEN *#85*



HEAD'S UP Patrick Stewart sets the wheels in motion as the X-Men's founder Professor X.

So Magneto says, "What do you think of what happened?"

"Oh, it's a real shame."

"Do you hate mutants for it?"

"No, I don't hate mutants for it. Whoever did this is bad..."

And Magneto tries, he's giving humankind one last shot, and he pressures this poor human into saying, "All right, I f---ing hate you."

"I knew you hated me." Now you've got war. And that's kind of the state where mankind is. It's stratified all over the place. It's very real.

So did you use anything from the comics to help round out the onscreen characters, to make them stand apart?

Yeah. Probably among the more classic attributes, like relationships. Romantic relationships. The potential for romantic relationships between...I don't want to give away the plot.

Relationships between Jean and Scott, the relationship between Jean and Xavier, the relationship between Xavier and Logan, the relationship between Scott and Logan and things like that.

And this film focuses on things through Logan's eyes?

Rogue and Logan. It's a dual sort of thing.

It takes the essence of that lost feeling of waking up one day and realizing you're different from everyone else, and it takes two characters who deal with it in both different and similar ways. It brings them together and it educates them. They go through different journeys, similar journeys, journeys that both men and women can identify with.

We might actually have a superhero movie that women can appreciate and enjoy every bit as much as men.

You've said you're playing Rogue "very young" in the movie, so how will you portray Wolverine?

Like the comic. [*Pauses*] Really, it's very much like the comic. A tragic and dangerous figure filled with love that is just trapped in this metal skeleton. Boy, that sounded awfully poetic. Write that down!

If you could have a mutant power, what would it be?

To fly. Because I could travel and be any place I wanted to be. At any time. That's just...yeah. To fly. And none of my characters fly.

None of them?

No one. Well, actually, that's not true. Rogue flies in the comic because she took Ms. Marvel's powers at some time. For the movie, Rogue's powers will be to absorb other people's powers, and in the case of human beings, to cause serious damage. She absorbs human energy. In the case of mutants, their powers, their gifts—for a short while.

Storm gets the wind, Magneto has the magnetic field. We do play with things like that, so I don't want to say they don't fly.

Could you imagine all these people flying around? It'd look like "The Witches of Eastwick."

But no one flies like Superman?

No. Everything makes sense. Even Stan Lee told me...I shouldn't say this, but he said Storm was kind of a silly idea for a mutant, because what kind of physical mutation could manipulate the weather?

So I said to him, I said, "Well, Stan, let's think. You know, you respond to the atmosphere, the atmosphere's basically moisture, moisture yadda, yadda, yadda...I came up with some whole scientific explanation for how I think somehow that physical property could exist. Much like the electric eel can transmit energy.

Did you get a No-Prize for that explanation?

[*Laughs*] Excelsior!

TONGUE TIED

Ray Park's Toad will leave fans with their tongues wagging

As Toad in the upcoming "X-Men" movie, Ray Park gets his licks in–in more ways than one.

The martial artist/stuntman plays the malicious henchman to the hilt, using all his athletic skill to bring the bouncing bad guy to the screen and bedevil Marvel's beloved mutants.

Park (Darth Maul in "Phantom Menace") gets help in that department from the special effects crew, which created a 12-foot-long tongue for Park that he puts to good–and skin-crawling–effect.

PARK

WIZARD: Tell us a little bit about the tongue Toad sports.

PARK: Toad has a long tongue. It's about 6 feet, but it does go to 12, and it's green and slimy and gooey and you don't want to be licked by it.

That's not in the comic. Was it created "special" for the movie?

I think so, yeah. It's good because it gives Toad a little more versatility and not just the ability of fighting and acrobatics. It's funny as well. It's pretty cool. It's a cool idea.

What does he use his tongue for?

Different stuff. Like, [*pauses*], I can't give too much away because then I won't have...you'll just have to wait and see.

Is the tongue prosthetic or computer generated?

A combination.

So there was actually a big tongue that you had to put in your mouth?

Yeah, I had to put this mouthpiece in. The tongue was made of some latex–silicon, I think.

And you really had to stuff it in your mouth?

Yeah, they made a good piece. Sort of like a dental piece when you go and get a brace or your crowns done. They just made a mold for my mouth so I could bite down on it.

So, do you think they'll let you keep it?

I've asked you know, but it's a popular item. [*Laughs*] CL

HUGH JACKMAN

ESCAPE CLAWS Even jabbing himself in the leg with 9-inch claws couldn't stop Jackman from playing the X-Men's most popular scrapper.

One look at Hugh Jackman erases any questions about which character he's portraying in "X-Men."

The lengthy sideburns scream "Wolverine," and it doesn't hurt that he's wearing Logan's favorite clothes—a beat-up leather jacket, multi-layered flannel shirts, jeans and boots. An outfit perfectly suited for a bar brawl...or a muddy film set.

In fact, the only things that separate Jackman from his Canuck counterpart are his Australian accent (which he can banish at will) and the multi-colored umbrella he's using to keep the snow from ruining his now-trademark head of hair.

The road to that customized coiffure was a long one for Jackman, who signed his "X-Men" contract just about two weeks before his predecessor (Dougray Scott) was set to appear before the cameras.

When Scott was injured filming "Mission Impossible 2," the "X-Men" producers sought out Jackman, a star of Australian stage and screen, to breathe life into comicdom's favorite Canadian.

Fans were initially skeptical of Jackman in the role because of his film inexperience, but the look he's brought to the part lays to rest any doubt that the Aussie's ready to break out as the X-Men's most popular member.

WIZARD: Is it daunting to play one of the most popular characters in comics history?

JACKMAN: No question. It's a fine line we walk in this movie of making it realistic and having it in sort of a tone that is real...maintaining the essence of the story without it being two dimensional in any way.

Things like the hair, for example. We had to work on that for a long time, because all the fans in the first moment have to say, "That's Wolverine." The more I find out about it, the more of a responsibility and the more of an honor it is, because this character—in people's imaginations—is literally larger than life.

So what were you going for in your portrayal of Logan?

What I really wanted to get with Wolverine was that he's a street fighter—he's quick, he's fast, he's smart, but he's not pretty.

He's not in there to spar with you...if he can slash your head off in one go, that's what he'll do.

Did you read a lot of comic books for research?

Bryan didn't want me to read any. I was into comics as a kid, but for some reason *X-Men* escaped me. But since then I have read quite a lot. I love the "Weapon X" story [from *Marvel Comics Presents* #72-#84), it's fantastic.

They [comics] have been a really great resource, just in terms of finding the physicality and how Wolverine is, how he draws his claws. I've used it a lot for that...and the history. I barely go a day without telling me something about his background.

There's so many expectations of what people have. I mean, they're growing up with these images in their head—how do you translate that to film? How do you make the world believable as well? Translating a comic book, it's very difficult.

Any little things you pulled from your research to spice up the character on film?

I dropped "Bub" in there a couple of times. It hasn't actually been in the script. But I've slipped it in a couple of times at the end of lines, and hopefully it will make it in the movie. It's such a signature thing.

So, in your mind, what do the X-Men stand for?

Tolerance. Instead of being good and bad, we set up different camps with Magneto, Xavier and the X-Men. So you have the Brotherhood, the X-Men, and then you've got Senator Kelly,

THE GREATEST quotes

"BEFORE I MET YOU, I NEVER UNDERSTOOD EVIL. YOU ARE EVIL, PROTEUS. BUT YOU HAVE MADE A FATAL MISTAKE. YOU TOYED WITH ME WHEN YOU SHOULD HAVE SLAIN ME, ALLOWING ME TIME TO CHANGE FROM PETER RASPUTIN...TO COLOSSUS! THAT MISTAKE WILL BE YOUR LAST!"
—COLOSSUS TO PROTEUS BEFORE KILLING HIM, UNCANNY X-MEN *#128*

WOLVERINE PHOTO COURTESY OF TOPPS

"Wolverine's a street fighter—he's quick, he's fast, he's smart, but he's not pretty."

who is basically representing a part of mankind that doesn't understand these other two camps. Logan isn't a part of any of those.

Does Logan bond with any of his film teammates?

One of the key relationships in this movie that's being explored is the Rogue/Logan relationship.

When he meets Rogue, he doesn't want a thing to do with her. She's just a dogged little individual that sort of tags on. After a while, Logan—without wanting or expecting it—begins to care for this little girl, and this little girl looks up to him for protection in the world. Not only in the real world, but also in the world of the mutants—even in Professor Xavier's school—she still looks up to him.

It's really...he's keen to it, but he's very reluctant the whole time.

So if Rogue's your best friend on the team, what's your relationship with Professor X?

I am the most non-reverential person around him. There's one scene where I call him Chuck. And then everyone looks and thinks no one has ever called him anything over than Professor! No one has ever called him Charles even! Maybe in a friendly tone, but I deliberately make jokes about him to his face. But underlying all that, there's a growing respect Wolverine has for him. By the very end, I think that Logan would probably do anything for him. But it's a hard respect for anyone to win. To win Logan's respect is difficult. And Xavier earns it.

So Logan doesn't see Xavier as the father figure like the other X-Men. He sees him more of like a brother, an uncle, a co-worker?

Definitely not a father to begin with. He's completely distrustful of any kind of institution. Any institution for Logan is to be questioned. It definitely starts out that he is not intimidated by him, he's continually questioning him. And it's good for Xavier as well.

And Patrick has a wonderful way of maintaining his authority as well as giving consideration to everything that Logan questions. So that by the end there's just that kind of respect that I would say by the middle of the next movie, Logan would die for him. Logan would do anything for him.

How was it working with Patrick Stewart?

Amazing. As an actor, he is a constant. When he walks on the set, there's a different atmosphere. His passion for the piece and everything he does is never-ending. I think he has a weight about him. He's got a sense of quiet authority about him. He just commands attention as a person.

As a character, Xavier has a very weak physicality, but Stewart still commands attention. He's never to be more than 2/3 the height of anybody else! But he still maintains a physical presence which is strong. Patrick and Ian [McKellen], those two will give a real weight to the whole piece which I think is just going to make it better and better. And it's what this comic deserves.

RATED X Jean Grey (Famke Janssen) gives Wolverine a thorough exam. She may wanna put on some gloves though...

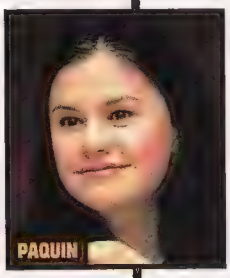
TEEN ANGST

Teen queen Anna Paquin talks about playing the X-Men's youngest member

Anna Paquin giggles when she sees the tape recorder on the table before her.

She's undoubtedly faced similar devices plenty of times during her brief, yet illustrious career, but all teenagers–even those who've won Academy Awards (for 1993's "The Piano")–are entitled to be a little bit shy.

Paquin, the youngest member of the cast, warms up quickly, though. Laughing and smiling, she explains her character in "X-Men," Rogue, the youngest member of the team.


PAQUIN

WIZARD: Where's Rogue coming from when we first meet her in the film?

PAQUIN: She's recently discovered her powers, so she's still quite overwhelmed by her abilities and what that means for her in terms of being able to have a normal life–or basically, not being able to have a normal life.

She's just very alone at this point.

Do you think that's something all teenagers go through?

Yes. [*Laughs*] I think at some stage, all people have felt like they're different, like they don't fit in.

You and Wolverine start off together in the movie–can you describe the relationship between the characters?

Wolverine is one of the first other mutants, I think. At least, he's one of the first mutants she's come across, so obviously she feels a connection to him. He's going through similar things that she's going through, even though he's older than her. There's a connection there because they have something very significant in common.

She deals with her mutation in a different way though, doesn't she?

Well, the nature of her mutation is incredibly different to his. His is almost…he can feel, he has claws and such. She can't touch anyone–ever. That's an incredibly isolating thing.

Did you know anything about Rogue before joining the cast?

I never read a lot of the comics, but I remember watching the cartoon.

What did you get from that?

Not much. I was about seven at the time! [*Laughs*] CL

What was the toughest thing physically for you to adjust to playing Wolverine?

Definitely the claws. The first claws I had were razor sharp. I have to say, they were just ridiculous because they would kill somebody without a doubt.

The most difficult thing was getting used to that extra 9 inches [of the claws], because you want to keep getting closer to hit someone, but you don't have to be.

We spent about three weeks of straight work with the stunt guys in getting the fighting style right and how [Wolverine] uses those claws. Because he is the best at what he does, you know? You can't look like an animal.

The claws themselves look pretty complicated. Did they cause you any physical problems, like carpel tunnel syndrome?

[*Laughs*] No, but I got a nice scar on my leg actually from the X-Men uniforms that we have. I was doing the big fight with Sabretooth, and I don't even know how I did it, but I punctured straight through my costume. And I remember thinking, "That was a bit sore, that was close." At the end of the day I took off the suit and there was this red patch and I punctured straight through the skin.

You mentioned you do stage fighting—Have you had a lot of training in that?

Yes. I have trained. I did four years of training as an actor and it's part of the training. A big part of it. I have never trained fully in martial arts or anything like that, but I've done enough to be able to adapt to whatever. And then specific training for this.

Were you scared you'd get hurt while fighting Sabertooth?

We both loved it. I never worried about it. It's only later afterwards. Or when I took off my suit and saw blood and I realized I'd been going three days of slashing and I thought, "I could have easily just poked him in the eye or something like that." But at the time we were just loving it. It was great fun. I mean at one point we were going so hard and I started to get this huge headache and before I knew it, I had heat exhaustion. You would think a guy from Australia would be pretty cluey with that, but I wasn't. And then suddenly I was vomiting in the trailer. It's so hot in those suits.

Do you think Logan's popularity will translate to the big screen?

Yes. Absolutely.

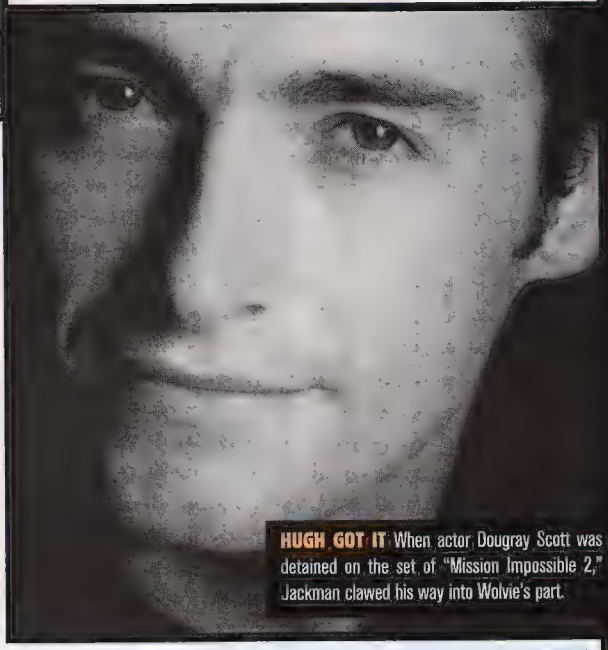
Why?

I think he's got a good sense of humor. He's funny and he's unpredictable and he's very tough—but in a believable way.

He's not cheesy in any way. The quicksilver quality that Wolverine has to him is magnetic, and there's a little part of us that all want to be Wolverine.

He's not bound by anything. He doesn't care what anyone thinks about him. He's just living his life exactly how he wants to live it, and he says exactly what he wants to anyone. And he does exactly what he wants. It would be pretty free to be Wolverine in real life.

He is also, I think, I may be wrong…but if you matched up Wolverine with any of the X-Men characters, he would come out on top. Wouldn't he? Wouldn't he!?


HUGH GOT IT When actor Dougray Scott was detained on the set of "Mission Impossible 2," Jackman clawed his way into Wolvie's part.

PAQUIN PHOTO THEO KINGMA/SHOOTING STAR; JACKMAN PHOTO COURTESY OF NANCY SELTZER & ASSOCIATES

THE GREATEST quotes

"OKAY, SUCKERS–YOU'VE TAKEN YOUR BEST SHOT! NOW IT'S MY TURN!"
–*WOLVERINE, EMERGING FROM THE SEWERS AFTER BEING BEATEN BY THE HELLFIRE CLUB*, UNCANNY X-MEN #132

Change
Is
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TYLER MANE

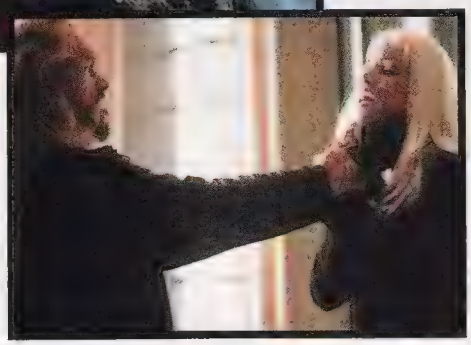
Tyler Mane casts an imposing shadow.

Though he crouches over in the hot seat, compacting his 6' 10" frame, he's still imposing—and it doesn't help matters at all when he says things like "I want to tear his arms off and flog him as best I can" in his deep, undulating voice.

Such attributes made the former professional wrestler the natural choice to play Sabretooth, Wolverine's powerful, animalistic archenemy.

The similarities between Mane and his onscreen persona go no further, however. Sure, the actor may be just as tough as his comic counterpart, but he keeps his hands folded throughout the entire interview, during which he speaks with the sort of eloquence the grunting Sabretooth'd kill for.

FROST BITE Not even snow can keep Sabretooth (Tyler Mane) from hunting down the X-Men, including Halle Berry's Storm (inset).



WIZARD: What's it like playing Sabretooth?

MANE: It's just a fun thing. You get to do something totally, totally different from a normal acting role. Throwing people all over the place and beating the heck out of them.

So you like playing the villain?

That's actually the most fun part. You've just got a one-track mind— just tearing people apart. You know you don't have to worry about being a nice guy.

Sabretooth's more action than speaking. He goes and takes care of business and then worries about the consequences later.

What's his role in the Brotherhood?

He's Magneto's main henchman/destroyer. He's the guy that he counts on to get things done.

What's your relationship with Wolverine in the film?

My relationship is every time I see him, I want to beat the heck out of him. I want to tear his arms off and flog him as best I can.

Do he and Sabretooth have a past together?

Yes. I believe Sabretooth is approximately 150 years old and Wolverine's about 50-something years old, and they both go back to the CIA and all that...they have a long history together.

Did you pick up any comics to find out about the character?

When I found out that I would be getting the role, the first thing I did was rush straight out to the comic stores and get as many X-Men comics as I could with Wolverine and Sabretooth in them.

Then I realized that there are even Sabretooth comics out there. So I got everything I could and gathered it together.

There're just so many different versions of it and they kept coming out with so many different comics...

What'd you think of them?

I couldn't believe the price! Somebody's making a lot of money...

Marvel Comics.

Of course. That's why it's their No. 1 franchise! [*Laughs*]

What did you pull from reading the comics?

I basically got an attitude. Just reading the way it was written, the way Sabretooth's lines were written, he's not a very well-spoken person. It's more of a grunt and a groan and "I am going to rip your head off"-type attitude. That's what I adapted to it.

What's the costume like?

I wear 4-inch lifts in the movie. Like 6' 10" wasn't tall enough. I've got 4-inch lifts on and I'm completely in leather.

Was it tough to move around with all that on?

Yeah, it took a little getting used to. It was pretty heavy and took a little while to get used to it, but once it got all loosened up, it was okay. But once I had it on, and you see yourself in the mirror, you are definitely in character.

How was it fighting with Hugh Jackman (Wolverine)?

It's been a lot of fun. When we got together and we started...it was just a lot of fun for me from the get go.

We were just experimenting, developing things and developing the fights and we worked really good...I think it put Hugh's mind at ease when he found out I had 11 1/2 years of a wrestling background.

So did you feel like an animal playing Sabretooth?

Most definitely. I mean, everyday I would look at the comic books and read them and then go out and do my thing.

Once you're in character and once you have the costume on, it's very easy to get in to that kind of mode, of wanting to tear somebody's head off.

And after sitting in the trailer for several hours dressed like that, it really was no problem.

Wizard Staff Writer Christopher Lawrence possesses the mutant power of peeping. And he uses it for evil.

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"IF YOU REALLY WANT TO TANGLE WITH SOMEONE, WHY NOT TRY YOUR LUCK AGAINST...THE WOLVERINE!"
—WOLVERINE, MAKING HIS INTRODUCTION AND INTERRUPTING A BATTLE BETWEEN THE HULK AND WENDIGO, INCREDIBLE HULK *(VOL. 1) #180*

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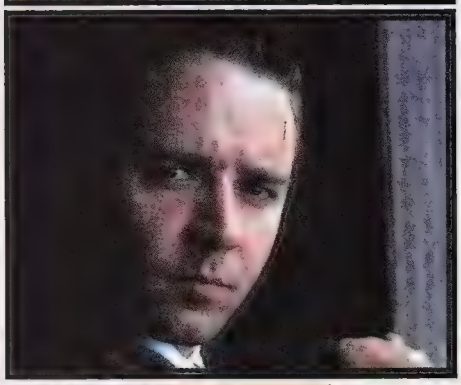
CASTING call

LOEB & SALE cast the BATMAN: DARK VICTORY MOVIE!

BY JEPH LOEB AND TIM SALE

If Hollywood's lookin' for a killer movie, Batman: Dark Victory*'s it. With more twists and turns than a hangman's noose, this 13-issue mystery is primed for the big screen. So* Wizard *tapped writer/screenwriter/producer Jeph Loeb ("Commando," "Teen Wolf") and his partner-in-crime, artist Tim Sale, to cast it for us. Take it away, guys...*

Early in Batman's career, the Dark Knight is caught in the middle of a gang war between the old criminal organizations (the five crime families, led by Sofia Falcone) and the "Freaks" (Arkham Asylum escapees like Two-Face, Joker and Poison Ivy). Batman is further stumped by a serial cop killer known only as The Hangman, named for the notes pinned to his victims. Uncertain if he can trust anyone ever again, Batman must open his heart to a young orphaned acrobat named Dick Grayson who'll join his crusade as Robin, The Boy Wonder.



RUSSELL CROWE as BATMAN

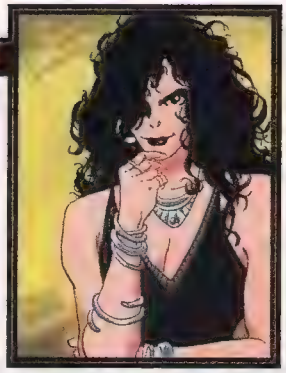
From the brutal cop in "L.A. Confidential" to the frightened whistle blower in "The Insider," Russell Crowe's got the strength, confidence and ominous brooding needed for both Bruce Wayne and Batman.

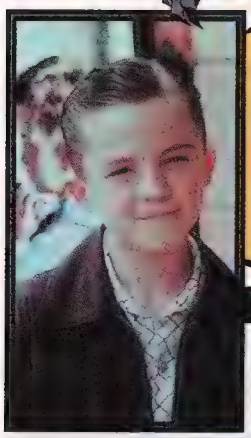
THE GREATEST quotes

"DON'T YOU SEE? ROBIN WILL ALWAYS BE THE BACK HALF OF 'BATMAN AND–'"
–*DICK GRAYSON, ON QUITTING HIS ROBIN IDENTITY,* NEW TEEN TITANS *(VOL. 1) #39*

JENNIFER LOPEZ as CATWOMAN

Sexy as she is flirtatious, pop singer/actress Jennifer Lopez ("Out of Sight") has got all the right moves to bring Batman's ally/enemy to life. Plus, we just want to meet her.





FRANKIE MUNIZ as ROBIN

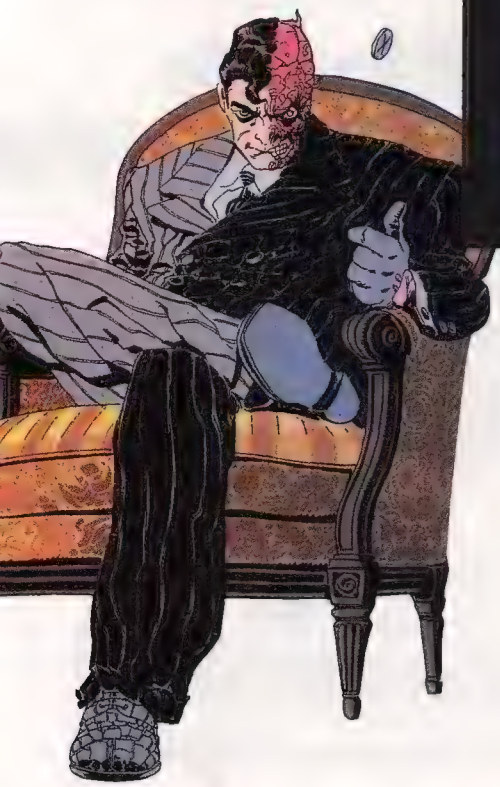
The hot young star of "Malcolm in the Middle," Frankie Muniz's wiry athletic frame and spunky attitude are perfect to spring Robin to life.

RAY LIOTTA as THE JOKER

Unlike the aging hipster Jack Nicholson made famous in the first "Batman" movie, Ray Liotta ("Unlawful Entry," "GoodFellas") has that caged insanity which can explode at any time. His young Joker would be a real homicidal maniac.

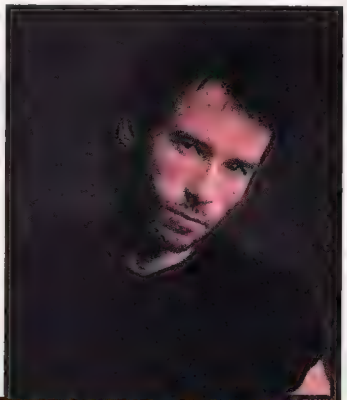
KEVIN SPACEY as TWO-FACE

Kevin Spacey's proven he can be both ruthless ("The Usual Suspects") and wildly likable ("American Beauty"). Just like Harvey Dent/Two-Face.



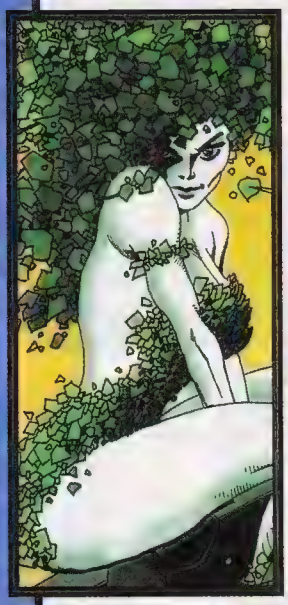
GILLIAN ANDERSON as JANICE PORTER

The "X-Files" star has the simmering sexuality and hard-nosed smarts to take on Batman and Two-Face as Gotham City's newest District Attorney.



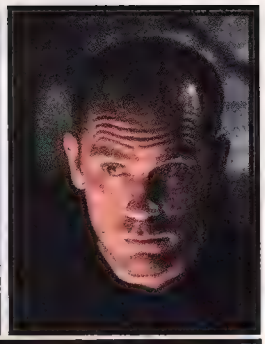
GUY PEARCE as COMMISSIONER GORDON

The straitlaced cop from "L.A. Confidential" is the perfect foil to Crowe's Batman. Guy Pearce's Gordon would be driven by his job, yet anguished by what's happening in his personal life.



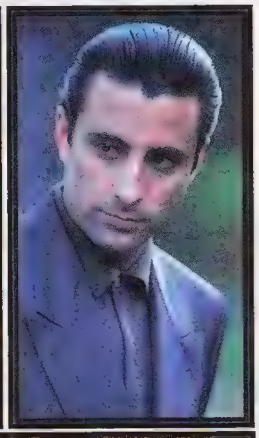
ANGELINA JOLIE as POISON IVY

From the dangerously unpredictable ("Girl, Interrupted") to her smoldering sexuality ("Pushing Tin"), Angelina Jolie's proven she can be the woman with the kiss of death any day she wants.



JOHN MALKOVICH as CALENDAR MAN

John Malkovich's portrayal of the brilliant, unbalanced assassin from "In the Line of Fire," coupled with his disturbing stare, makes him the perfect Calendar Man. And besides, he's almost bald anyway—all he needs are the tattoos of the various months around his head.



ANDY GARCIA as MARIO FALCONE

From "The Untouchables" to "Internal Affairs," Andy Garcia's charm and good looks mask a character capable of great violence. As much as we trust Mario Falcone, with Garcia playing the part, we'll never know if we should.

KATHY BATES as SOFIA FALCONE

An Academy Award winner for playing the psycho in "Misery," Kathy Bates has the presence, strength and wickedness to play the wheelchair-bound Sofia Falcone.

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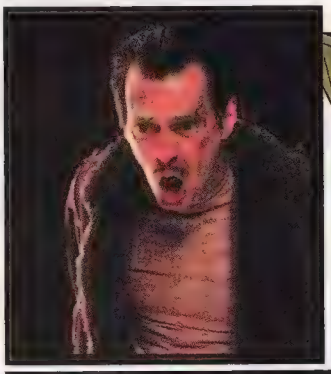
JOHN TURTURRO as ALBERTO FALCONE

John Turturro ("Do The Right Thing," "Quiz Show") has the quiet innocence and broiling anger necessary to play the maybe-not-so-crazy Alberto Falcone.



STEVE BUSCEMI as THE RIDDLER

Nobody plays weasel like Steve Buscemi ("Armageddon," "Con Air"). As the intelligent but cowardly Riddler, Buscemi can make the enigmatic villain likable and dangerous.

QUIET ON THE SET!

THE GREATEST quotes

"HOW CAN TWO PEOPLE HATE SO MUCH WITHOUT KNOWING EACH OTHER?"
—BATMAN TO ALFRED ABOUT HIS LONG-STANDING FEUD WITH THE JOKER,
BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE

SHE BLEEDS, YOU DIE, END OF STORY

Her name is

DINA:

and she's gonna make your

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TARDY 'CLERKS' INFURIATE KEVIN SMITH

Claims Disney would rather be a 'Millionaire'

The good news: "Clerks" is coming! The bad news: "Clerks" is coming May 31.

Kevin Smith, the acclaimed filmmaker and writer/producer of ABC's upcoming "Clerks" cartoon, is storming mad. ABC parent company Disney has pushed the premiere of Smith's animated series from March into a tougher summer time frame.

"Our unceremonious dumping in May is pretty much the death knell for our livelihood on ABC," Smith said. "The thing that pisses me off is that the network dug the show. [ABC heads] Stu Blumberg and Lloyd Braun were extremely happy. Disney chairman Michael Eisner and his second-in-command Bob Iger checked it out, and they didn't 'get it.' Since it's their company, they apparently told Stu and Lloyd that there was no way we were going to air in March."

Smith doesn't think Disney—whose Miramax division passed on releasing Smith's religious-toned movie, "Dogma"—has a personal vendetta. "It's just big business," Smith said. "It seems their intention is to win the season by showing 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?' eight or nine times a week. Suddenly, we seem like a risk they don't need to take anymore."

Smith also feels the plug has been pulled on support. "Before Eisner's decision, we were promised a promotional budget that would've allowed for giveaways at all the comic conventions they were sending us to this summer to tub-thump for the show," Smith said. "Now we're lucky if we can get 75 cents for the soda machine. If you see us at a con and we don't have any free swag to give you, just remember: It's Disney's fault."

And though Disney seems to have yanked all support, Smith isn't without his own backers. Paul Dini, the creator behind the Emmy-nominated Kids' WB cartoons "Batman Beyond" and "The New Batman/Superman Adventures," sent a letter to News Askew, a Website devoted to Smith's works, supporting the filmmaker.

"Kevin and Dave [Mandel] are good friends of mine and I've been aware of 'Clerks—The Cartoon' since almost

UNDER PRESSURE Kevin Smith's not sure what his final answer will be concerning the "Clerks" cartoon.

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"THE BEYONDER IS DEAD! NOW, THE SUPREME BEING IN THE UNIVERSE...IS DOOM!"
—DR. DOOM, AFTER GAINING THE POWER OF THE BEYONDER, SECRET WARS *#10*

REGIS PHILBIN COURTESY ABC; KEVIN SMITH BY PAUL SCHIRALDI; THE POPE COURTESY APPROVE WORLD PHOTOS; ALEX ROSS BY GARY HAMBARGER; JASON MEWES PICTURE COURTESY NEW ASKEW FILMS; ELLEN DEGENERES COURTESY EVERETT COLLECTION

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL
"Dude, isn't that your mom?"

day one...it looked like 'Clerks' would be a runaway hit," he said. "Not only is 'Clerks' funnier than nearly everything else ABC has in prime time, it would be the perfect series to hook the upper teen audience too old for 'Sabrina' and too young for 'Drew Carey'," he said. "Ah, but now I'm thinking like a network programmer, and ABC clearly employs chimpanzees for that."

One Disney chimp, who refers to himself (or herself) as "The Anonymous Loon," sent a letter to the Smith Website, a copy of a memo that's been circulated around Disney Animation, apparently in response to Smith's claims that he'd been screwed by Mickey Mouse & Co.

"Disney may or may not be many evil things, but let's face it, the 'screwing' was done primarily by the inflated egos of the writers, producers and director of the 'Clerks' animated series," the Loon wrote, prior to launching into a dissertation about the difficulties supposedly caused by Smith.

Smith, whose response to the note ran side-by-side with the Loon's diatribe, acknowledged certain shortcomings on his part, including delays in character design approval and late scripts, though he denied any culpability for the show's May debut.

"Being that we have no power over the scheduling of the show, it was impossible for us to do any 'screwing' ourselves," he said. "You've got the slave-mind when it comes to the Mouse, my friend. I'm a free man. I calls it like I sees it. And I see red..."

As for possible recourse, Smith said he's thinking about buying "Clerks" back from ABC and turning the six existing half-hour episodes into a feature film for theatrical release. That possibility remains vague.

Smith's future with the network is anything but.

"F--- ABC, I say," Smith concluded. "F--- 'em hard, the liars." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN AND CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE**

FIGHT. FIGHT. FIGHT!

KEVIN SMITH VS. THE WORLD

Ya gotta love Kevin Smith. Not only is the guy an awesome writer, an accomplished film director and an all-around fanboy, he doesn't shy away from controversy. His brouhaha with Disney over TV's "Clerks" represents the latest in a string of well-publicized feuds. Don't believe us? Just take a look.

KEVIN VS. CATHOLICS Smith infuriated religious groups with "Dogma," which was perceived as blasphemous for its flippant look at Catholicism, which included a 13th Apostle who is black and two foul-mouthed prophets. Smith eventually added a disclaimer before the film. And oh yeah, "Dogma" was Smith's biggest box-office success to date.

KEVIN VS. JAY Smith fired his trusted sidekick, stoner Jay (Jason Mewes), from the New Jersey comic store Smith owns. The two have patched their differences and Jay and Silent Bob made a cameo appearance in "Scream 3" and are scheduled to return in a "Clerks" sequel. Surprisingly, Silent Bob had no comment.

KEVIN VS. ALEX ROSS The comic creators squabbled after "Mallrats," which Ross felt slighted Jack Kirby by crediting Stan Lee as the father of comics. The result? That tabloid "Green Arrow" book by Smith and Ross? Forget about it. It ain't happening.

KEVIN VS. LESBIANS Smith angered gay rights activists with "Chasing Amy" because of the premise that a homosexual would suddenly turn heterosexual with "the right person." As a result, comic fanboys flock to gay bars looking for "the right girl."

KEVIN VS. DEBT Smith maxxed out his own credit card and his friends to finance his first film "Clerks." He even sold his beloved comic collection to get the movie made. "Clerks" ultimately paid off and Smith bought an entire comic store.

KEVIN VS. DISNEY Smith claims Disney screwed him by bumping back the "Clerks" debut to accommodate "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" Disney counters the show wasn't ready because of missed deadlines and other problems. As a result, "Clerks" gets a summer time slot, which Smith calls "the kiss of death." You may win lots of battles Kevin, but forget about this one: Nobody beats the Mouse. ■ **THE *WIZARD* STAFF**

TRAILERS...

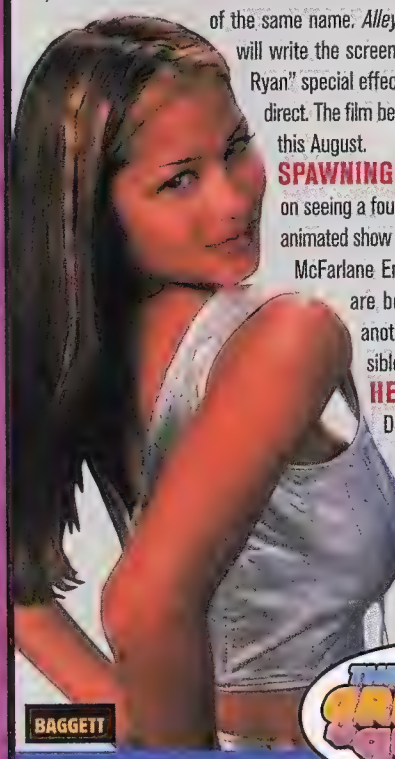
JOLIE

CROFT SUPERSTAR Simon West continues searching for someone to play Lara Croft in his upcoming "Tomb Raider" movie from Paramount, and the hottest prospect right now is Oscar-winner Angelina Jolie ("Girl Interrupted"). Jolie's in the midst of final negotiations for the role, and if all goes well, she'll be wearing the Raybans and khaki come summer 2001, which is the release date tentatively planned by West.

DIRECTOR SHARPENS 'BLADE' Director Guillermo del Toro ("Mimic") has been chosen to helm New Line's upcoming sequel to "Blade." del Toro will begin shooting the picture this coming November after completing work on the ghost pic, "The Devil's Backbone." Expect to see both Wesley Snipes and Kris Kristofferson return to fight a new breed of undead menace–even though Kristofferson's character was aced in the first film!

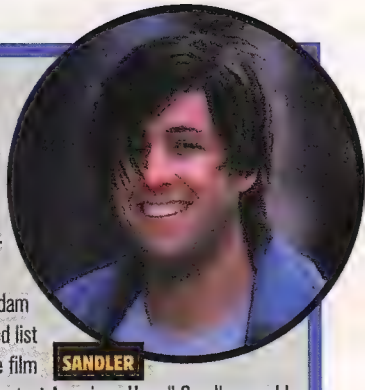
'SUPERNERDS' PILOT FLIES The pilot for "Supernerds," the sitcom that takes place in a comic store, was screened before Comedy Central execs in March. Kieron Dywer's *LCD* was prominently featured in the background, and one character was even seen reading *Wizard*. Artists Howard Porter (*JLA*) and Livesay (*Rising Stars*) also contributed to set design. No decision on if and when "Supernerds" will air.

CAT SCRATCH FEVER *Playboy* model Alley Baggett will star in "Alley Cat," a feature film for Mindfire Productions based on the Image Comics title of the same name. *Alley Cat* writer Matt Hawkins will write the screenplay, and "Saving Private Ryan" special effects wiz Greg Aronowitz will direct. The film begins filming in New Orleans this August.


BAGGETT

SPAWNING GROUND Don't count on seeing a fourth season of the "Spawn" animated show on HBO. According to Todd McFarlane Entertainment, new venues are being looked at, including another cable network or possible direct-to-video release.

HELLISH CAST Johnny Depp has reportedly signed on to play the inspector in the film version of Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's classic Jack the Ripper story *From Hell*. Terrance Stamp ("The Limey") has already joined the cast and Nigel Hawthorne ("The Madness of King George") is in negotiations to play Sir William Gull, the chief physician of the Queen.


SANDLER

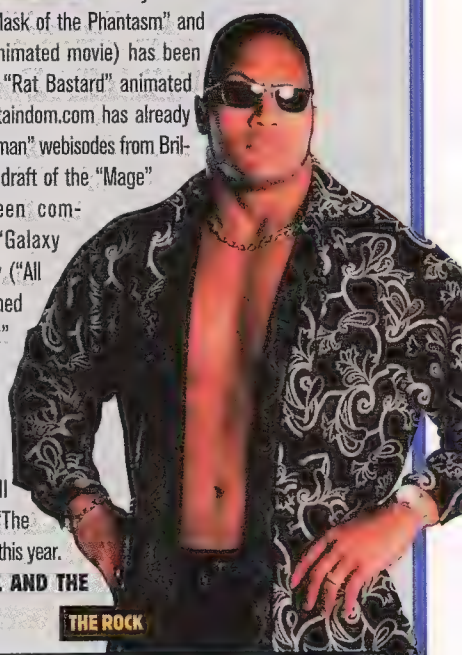
SUPER SANDLER! Funny man Adam Sandler is the first name on a rumored list of actors to play the lead in a feature film version of that ol' TV classic, "The Greatest American Hero." Sandler would be cast for the part of mild-mannered Ralph Handley, a bumbling teacher who finds an alien costume that grants him superpowers.

AMAZONIAN PIE The newest actress being bandied about to play Wonder Woman? None other than the lovely Shannon Elizabeth from the hit teen sex comedy "American Pie"! There's also buzz about Lynda Carter, TV's original Wonder Woman, possibly portraying WW's mom, Queen Hippolyta. Break out the magic lasso, baby!

ELIZABETH

SHORT TAKES Plans for Todd McFarlane's "Gorilla World" TV show for UPN have been scrapped, but McFarlane's working on a new, untitled project for the network...Paul Dini's working on a film adaptation of the Platinum Studios comic, *Million Dollar Heroes*, for New Line Cinema...Speaking of Dini, "Batman Beyond" and "Batman/Superman Adventures" racked up 13 daytime Emmy nominations...Kevin Altieri (director of "Batman: Mask of the Phantasm" and the shelved "Gen13" animated movie) has been tapped to work on the "Rat Bastard" animated series for UPN...Entertaindom.com has already ordered 15 more "Superman" webisodes from Brilliant Digital...The first draft of the "Mage" movie script has been completed...Jed Rees ("Galaxy Quest") and Liz Vassey ("All My Children") have joined the cast of "The Tick" playing Arthur and American Woman (known as American Maid in the comic)... WWF wrestler The Rock will play a new bad guy in "The Mummy 2," filming later this year.

■ **PATRICK SAURIOL AND THE *WIZARD* STAFF**


THE ROCK

THE GREATEST quotes

"ULTRON. WE WOULD HAVE WORDS WITH THEE."
–*THOR, CONFRONTING ULTRON WHO JUST SLAUGHTERED AN ENTIRE NATION,* AVENGERS *(VOL. 3) #22*

THE GREATEST COMIC MOVIES & TV SHOWS

BEST OF THE BEST

Batman rules the entertainment world.

That's what we discovered, as *Wizard* came up with the 5 greatest comic book movies/TV shows of all time. Don't believe us? Take a look:

5. "BATMAN" (1989) Finally, some respect. With awesome gothic scenery, killer costumes and a take-no-crap attitude, Tim Burton's first "Batman" movie finally gave the Caped Crusader the proper forum to wage his war on crime.

4. "BATMAN BEYOND" (1999) Toss a teenage Batman into a "Blade Runner"-like future and you've got fans frothing at the mouth to see the newest animated Dark Knight interact with a crotchety ol' Bruce Wayne.

3. "BLADE" (1998) The Daywalker triumphs. A *much* better movie than comic, Wesley Snipes' ass-kicking, vampire hunter proved comic book movies don't need a "PG" rating to be accepted.

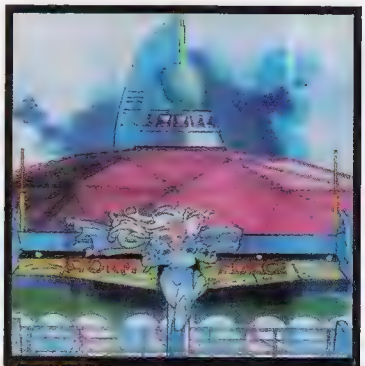
2. "SUPERMAN" (1978) Christopher Reeve truly made us believe a man could fly. Never cheesy or condescending, the first "Superman" movie gave fans a true comic book adaptation with awesome action and great special effects.

1. "BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES" (1992) Continuity. Wacked-out villains. And above all, intelligent, character-driven stories. "Batman: TAS" was so good in fact, it started an all-new animation style and kicked off a decade-long run of DC toons. ■ **THE *WIZARD* STAFF**

STORM WARNING!

Florida's known for its thunderstorms, but nothing could prepare the Sunshine State for the "Storm" coming this summer.

Storm Force, an all new thrill ride at Universal Studios Islands of Adventure, is the latest in high tech fun at Marvel Super Hero Island. Thrill seekers of all ages are enlisted by the X-Men's resident weather witch Storm in an attempt to take down Magneto, all while spinning in some of the worst weather central Florida's ever seen.



SIT-N-SPIN Try out Storm Force this summer, but don't forget the Dramamine.

"It's just a fun thrill ride," said Universal Studios' Michael McLane. "It's a spinning ride that takes place under a circular dome while special weather effects make it seem like riders are in the middle of a hurricane."

Universal felt it necessary to add an attraction for those who may not reach height requirements...or are a little too timid...to take on some of the most intense thrill rides in the Southeast.

"(Storm Force) is indeed a thrill ride, despite it's 'all ages' label," said McLane. "It's more intense than what you may find in Suess Landing."

Just be sure to avoid a Colossus-sized lunch at the Fantastic Four Cafe before you climb aboard. ■ **CASEY SEIJAS**

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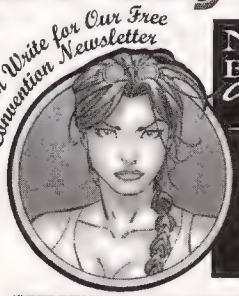

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Jason Carter-*Marcus Cole of Babylon 5*
Angela Cartwright-*Penny of Lost in Space*
Veronica Cartwright-*X-Files, Alien, The Birds*
Dick Durock-*TV's Swamp Thing*
Jonathan Frakes-*ST:Next Generation's William Riker*
Stephen Furst-*Vir on Babylon 5, Animal House*
Mark Goddard-*Major Don West on Lost in Space*
Linda Harrison-*Planet of the Apes*
Robert Duncan McNeil-*Paris from ST:Voyager*
Robert O'Reily-*Gowron on ST:Next Generation*
Ron Palillo-*Horshak on Welcome Back Kotter!*
Butch Patrick-*Eddie Munster*
Tom Savini-*Dusk 'Til Dawn*
Alexandra Tydings-*Aphrodite on Xena and Hercules*
Johnny Whitaker-*Jody Davis of A Family Affair*
Alan Young-*Voice of Uncle Scrooge McDuck*

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BASIC TRAINING

THE GREATEST COMIC INGREDIENTS

THE WIZARD STAFF SHOWS YOU

WHAT MAKES A GREAT COMIC

Making a top notch comic book ain't easy. In fact, it's downright hard. That's why *Wizard* pooled its resources and knowledge to break down exactly what makes a great comic. And we even hounded some of comics best talent to make sure we didn't miss anything.

To be honest, it's almost impossible to cover everything we came up with in just four pages, but these basic principles hold true for every creator from Alan Moore to Frank Miller to even YOU!

When a great comic hits stores, there's a perfect marriage between art and words, but before the two even get to the altar there's a heck of a lot of courting. Here's how to make the vows stick and your comic book great...

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL INSTRUCTOR

The Write Way

All great comics begin with a well-crafted story. And all well-crafted stories contain five simple principles: an intro, rising action, climax, resolution and finally a cliffhanger to keep readers coming back for more (Fig. A).

Nightwing writer Chuck Dixon uses those principles to craft a story, but says it all begins with one idea.

"I can gather ideas over a long period, years even," Dixon said. "Usually I'll start with a good scene and then build a plot around it."

Although Dixon painstakingly writes his books, even he admits art makes a book great.

"The pictures have to tell the story, not the words," the writer said. "You have to write good pictures to inspire the artist. Then you step back so the writing is invisible."

The writer's duties to inspire an artist don't stop on the interior pages, though. He also must inspire a cover that will catch a reader's eye...

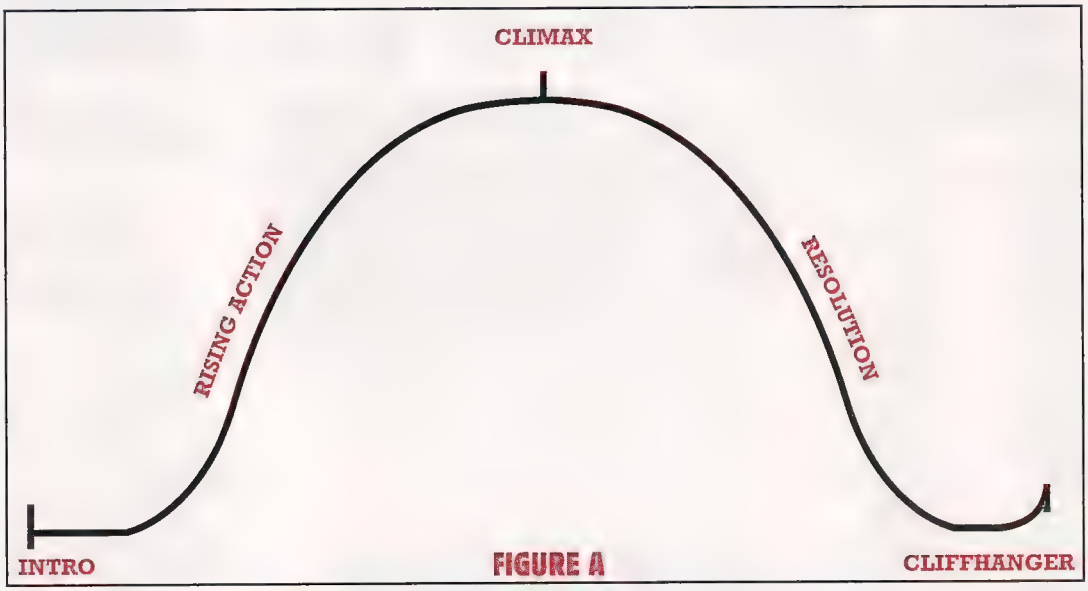


FIGURE A

THE GREATEST "quotes"

"FOR A MAN WHO CAN HEAR CLOUDS SCRAPE TOGETHER, YOU DON'T LISTEN VERY WELL."
–*BRUCE WAYNE, BLATANTLY DECLINING AN OFFER FROM SUPERMAN TO JOIN THE REFORMED JLA,* KINGDOM COME #2

The Cover Up

Before fans even read a single word or glimpse the first fight, the cover has to grab their attention.

It's the cover that makes a reader first pick up a comic and buy it. Just ask *Daredevil* cover artist Joe Quesada.

"How important is the way you dress, comb your hair or the first impression you give someone?" he asked. "It may not be what you're all about, but it's what people base their first impressions on."

And that impression has to be a good one. Covers like *Gen*[13] #1, *Green Lantern* #74, *Amazing Spider-Man* #39 and *SpyBoy* #3 all drove fans into a frenzy but for very different reasons. Most great covers can be broken down into four distinct categories: mystery, sexy, shock and parody. Here's four great examples of these cover styles and why readers can't resist them:

Mystery

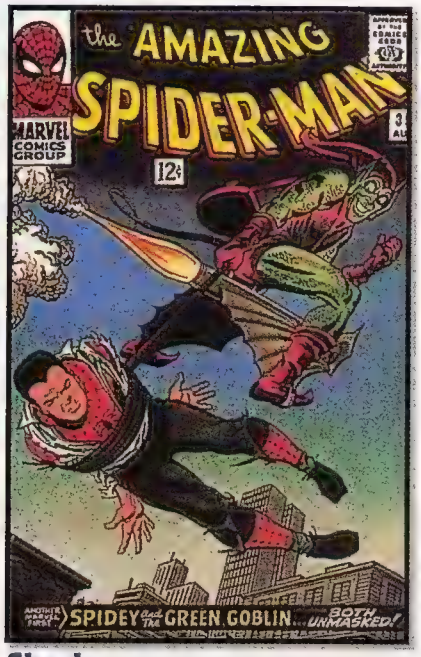
Green Lantern #74

Whether it's who's going to die in *Green Lantern*, who's joining the Avengers or a villain unmasked, when a reader sees a cover like this he's got to pick it up.

Parody

Gen[13] #1

Everybody likes a good parody. Giving a nod to popular culture (like this take-off of the Janet Jackson *Rolling Stone* cover) is another great way to lure in new readers.



Shock

Amazing Spider-Man #39

If there's one thing fans love, it's a shocker! And there's no more shocking event than a hero's secret identity being revealed to the world.

Sexy

SpyBoy #3

Sex sells. Plain and simple. And you better believe that rule applies to comics as well.

Making a Splash

Grab 'em by the throat and don't let go!

That's the way a splash page has to work. More than any other element of a book, the splash page pulls readers into a story. And just because it's a still panel doesn't mean your splash page can't start with a bang. Whether it's a story-driven twist (fig. B, the splash to *Fantastic Four* [Vol. 1] #257) or just a great piece of art, a splash page sets the tone for an issue.

Avengers penciler George Pérez says when he draws a splash page, whether it's Captain America taking on Ultron or Wonder Man grimacing, one thing holds true—keep your perspective.

"I want to get an interesting perspective and angle to look at," he says. "I'll throw a scene from an exaggerated down shot. Anything that can exaggerate their perspective. I want to give it depth in a two-dimensional medium."

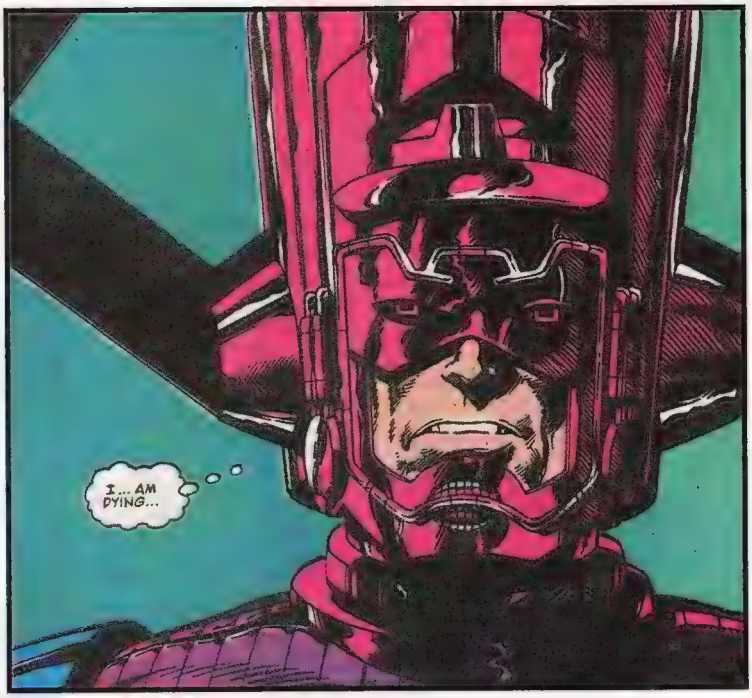
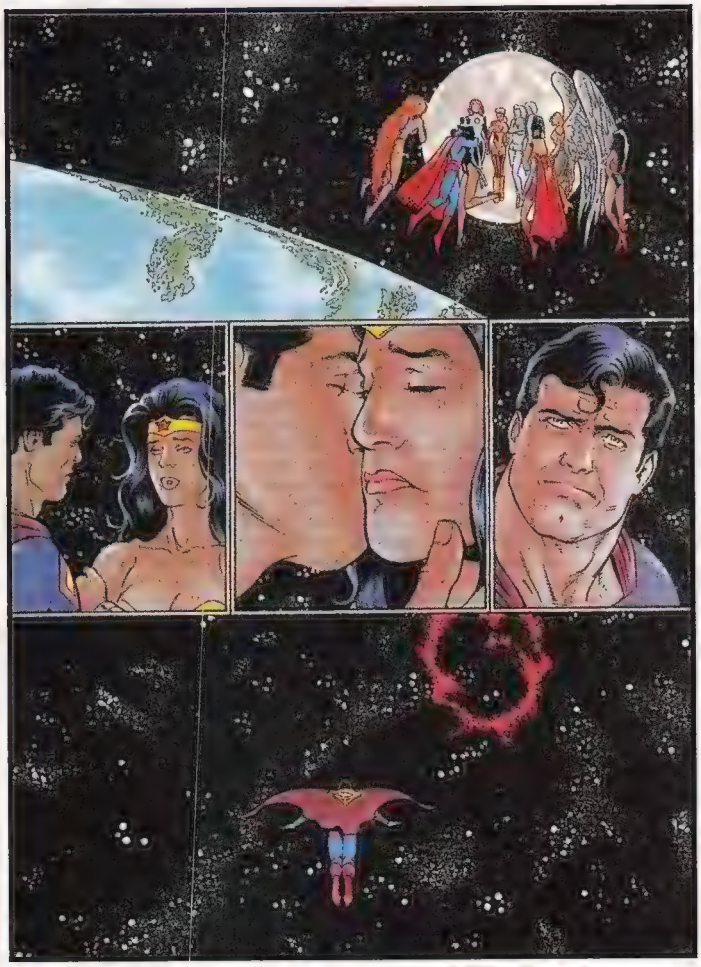


FIGURE B



Showing a Story

SHOW—don't tell!

It's a golden rule every writer lives by and it's no different in comics. While comics are produced in two-dimensional still frames, that's no reason they can't move or speak.

Even if there isn't a single word on the page, a comic's story must be told by the character's body language. Just take a peek at an issue of Steve Dillon's *Preacher* or *Punisher* work, Kevin Maguire's pencils on *Justice League* or the recent *JLA: Created Equal* miniseries (fig. C). A good artist is a good storyteller. Even without words, you can still understand the story.

While the artist works hard to make a story understandable, the writer needs to create believable dialogue. Dixon points out that his character's speech has to sound better than a human conversation.

"I try not to be too specific with my dialogue," Dixon said. "People talk in generalities. This should sound better than people normally speak but with less information than people usually give."

FIGURE C

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"ICEMAN—DON'T! FORGET ABOUT IT! THEY'RE NOT WORTH IT!"
-CYCLOPS, RESTRAINING ICEMAN FROM AN BRICK-THROWING MUTANT-HATING MOB, MARVELS #2

Under the Skin

There's only one way to keep a series alive—subplots.

One great arc on a series may keep a few readers but it's the subplots that keep them coming back for more. Just look at a title like *Robin*, where the subplot of, "will Robin date the Spoiler or Ariana?" kept readers scampering back.

"There's no other reason for readers to come back without a subplot," Dixon said. "A story might not compel everyone but subplots keep them coming back."

While some subplots pay off, others stutter and die. The one hard and fast rule of subplots, Dixon says, is make sure you pay it off!

"You just can't have some figure in the window," Dixon said. "You have to eventually reveal it."

Hanging On

Subplots are a great way to keep reader interest, but issue-ending cliffhangers make sure you *can't* miss the next issue!

Whether it's Spidey holding Gwen Stacy's dead body (fig. D), Clark Kent revealing he's Superman to Lois Lane (fig. E) or Tony Stark's secret identity splashed on the front page of a newspaper (fig. F), cliffhangers leave you hungry for more.

FIGURE D

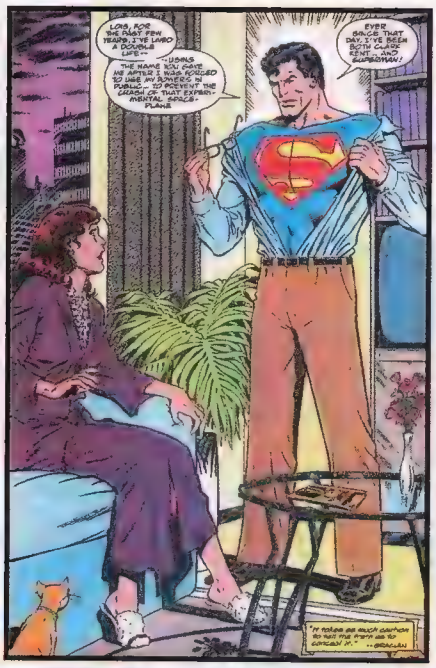


FIGURE E

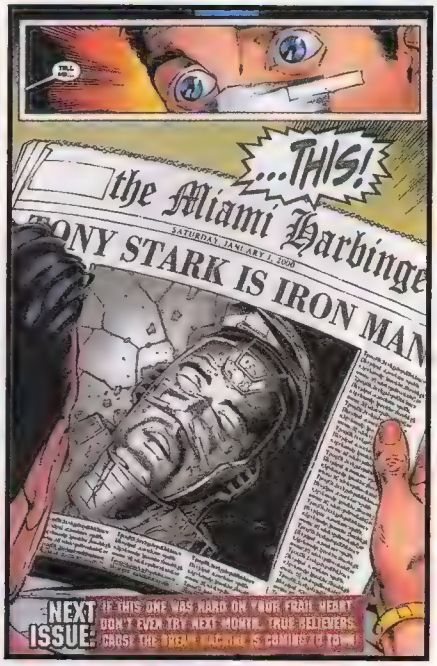


FIGURE F

And there you have it.

But just as important as any one of these elements is research. The best way to make a great comic is to *read* great comics...and there's plenty out there. So, go find them—and tell 'em *Wizard* sent ya.

The Wizard *Staff read plenty of great comics for this feature. Wanna see the 40 Greatest Comics of all time? Then jump to page 145 now!*

Drawing BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the showcase for WIZARD READERS' ART

We were all watching American Movie Classics the other day, feeling nostalgic, when we caught a screening of Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho." Then it hit us—black & white is cool! And being on that B&W kick obviously influenced our "Drawing Board" grand-prize pick this month, which was a lovely black and white of Magdalena done by Celesta Johnston of Mesa, Ariz. For all her hard, noir-ish work, Celesta takes home an awesome Alex Ross/X-Men Lithograph, courtesy of the great people at Dynamic Forces. Congrats to Celesta and all our other entrants.

By the way, we've got tons of art piling up, and we can't fit it all in the mag, so we're gonna start running it on our Website at www.wizardworld.com. We'll show a bunch of extra pieces every month, so if you're not in these pages, check out our site!

GRAND-PRIZE WINNER

THIS ONE CAUGHT OUR EYE

MAGDALENA TRIUMPHANT
CELESTA JOHNSTON
Mesa, Ariz.

THE BOOTY

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"YOU KNOW, LAST TIME WE MET, I WAS THINKING ALL YOU WERE WAS A RING AND AN ATTITUDE. NOW I'M SURE YOU ARE."
—WALLY WEST (FLASH) TO KYLE RAYNER (GREEN LANTERN), DURING ONE OF THEIR FIRST TEAM-UPS, GREEN LANTERN (VOL. 2) #67

CURVACEOUS CATWOMAN
CHAD WM. PORTER
Weston, Ontario, Canada

RAVING BAT-MANIAC
OLIN KIDD
Fort Wayne, Ind.

GODDESS OF THE STORM
RFJ
Mebane, N.C.

Think only fans check out "Drawing Board"? J. Michael Straczynski, writer of Top Cow's hit series *Rising Stars*, saw a piece of Superman art by Heath O'Meara he liked in *Wizard* #103 and offered to buy it! How's that for gettin' noticed?

Want your art to appear in future issues of *Wizard*? Think you've got what it takes? (Quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Hey, it worked for pros like Jeff Matsuda and Leinil Francis Yu, who went on to stardom! Then send your "Drawing Board" entries to:

SUBMIT!!

"Drawing Board"
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. **You must also include a color photo of yourself.** All entries are non-returnable and become the property of Wizard Entertainment. Employees of Wizard Entertainment are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? All right, good luck!

TOY CHEST

DC SCORES MORE DIRECT HITS

DC Direct just keeps getting better. Following up on the killer Tom Strong and Captain Marvel 2-packs of this spring, DC's scheduled yet another 2-pack that's sure to have fans foaming at the mouth: Mr. Miracle and Big Barda! Miracle checks in at 6 1/2 inches, features 11 points of articulation and sports a removable cape, while Barda's 7 inches, has seven points of articulation, and comes with a removable helmet and Omega Rod. As if that weren't enough, the set will also include the tiny Oberon, who stands 3 1/4 inches tall with four points of articulation. Look for the set in comic and specialty shops October 11.

Need even more of a DC fix? Then get ready for Impulse and Max Mercury, on sale separately October 25. Impulse is all of 5 3/4 inches tall with 11 points of articulation, and Max clocks in at 6 1/2 inches tall, also with 11 points of articulation. Both are accompanied by a base bearing the Flash insginia, perfect for display!

DIRECT CURRENTS DC serves up a glorious Big Barda & Mr. Miracle 2-pack, followed by separate figures of Impulse and Max Mercury (inset).

BY DAN DiGIACOMO

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"THAT ZATANNA. OH, OH, OH, WHAT A GAL! PLEASURES OF THE FLESH, HOW I MISS YA!"
—BOSTON BRAND (DEADMAN) ON HIS PAST LIFE AS A MORTAL, BOOKS OF MAGIC (MINI) #2

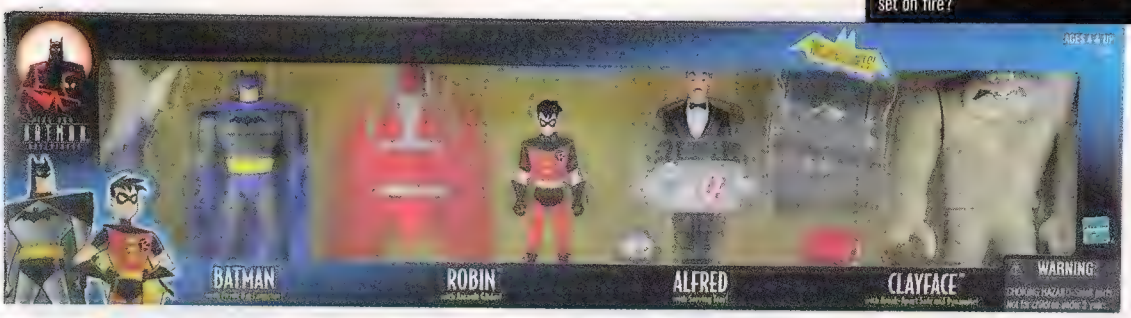
BLOCK PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHRALIN; DC DIRECT PHOTOS COURTESY DC DIRECT; SUPERMAN & BATMAN ANIMATED COURTESY HASBRO; SIMPSONS COURTESY PLAYMATES; VAMPIRELLA COURTESY MOORE COLLECTIBLES.

ENTER: ALFRED

Sure, you've got a million Batman figures. Even a Nightwing and a Robin for good measure. And, of course, some bad guys. But do you have Alfred Pennyworth, Bruce Wayne's loyal butler? Nope.

But come this summer, you can! That's when Hasbro Direct will release this Toys'R'Us-exclusive Batman Adventures four-pack, featuring Alfred, Clayface, Robin and a newly redecoed Batman! So not only do you get the first-ever Alfred figure, you also get a Dark Knight-esque animated Batman. What's not to love?

FANTASTIC FOUR Sure, but who gets set on fire?



SIMPSONS-ARAMA!

D'oh! Just when you thought your wallet was safe, along comes Playmates with plans for two more Simpsons assortments!

What Springfielders are on tap for this summer? Expect figures of Barney Gumble, Moe the Bartender, Ned Flanders, Waylon Smithers, Chief Wiggum, Nelson Muntz, Pin Pals Homer, Principal Skinner and Sunday Best Homer and Bart, all with unique sound chips activated by the cool Simpsons playsets. Wave three, tentatively set for fall 2000, will include Simpsons faves Milhouse, Lenny, Ralph Wiggum, Groundskeeper Willie and Otto.

GENE THERAPY If you lived in Springfield, you'd look like this, too.

VAMPIN' IT!

Man, if there's one toy we've been waiting a long time for, it's this one!

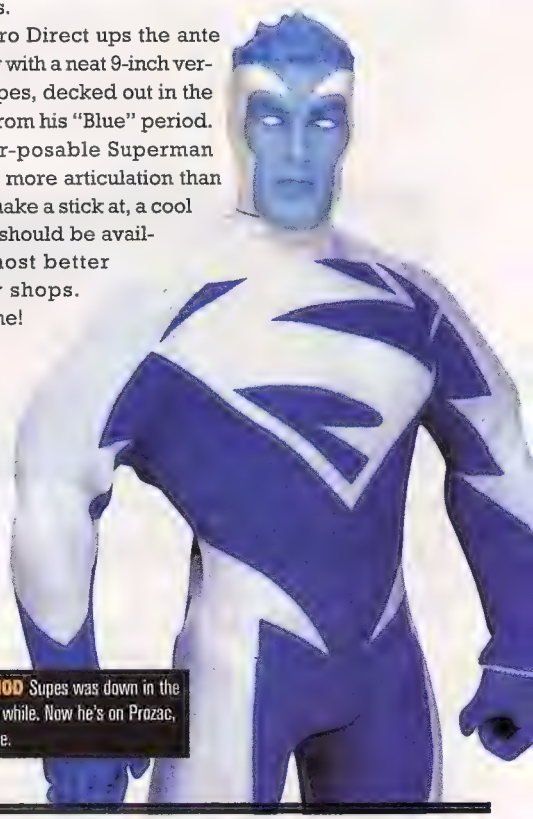
Moore Action Collectibles is ready to bust out Vampirella this July, complete with a cool graveyard base that features a stone cross and a crescent moon. Of course, she'll also be wearing the classic costume we've all come to know and love. Woohoo!

DENTAL HYGENIE Vampi's keepin' the dental floss companies in business. With her costume.

GOT THE BLUES

And you thought you had the blues.

Hasbro Direct ups the ante this spring with a neat 9-inch version of Supes, decked out in the costume from his "Blue" period. The super-posable Superman Blue's got more articulation than you can shake a stick at, a cool base and should be available at most better specialty shops. Go buy one!



BLUE PERIOD Supes was down in the dumps for a while. Now he's on Prozac, and doin' fine.

From the creators of WIZARD: THE COMICS MAGAZINE

ToyFare

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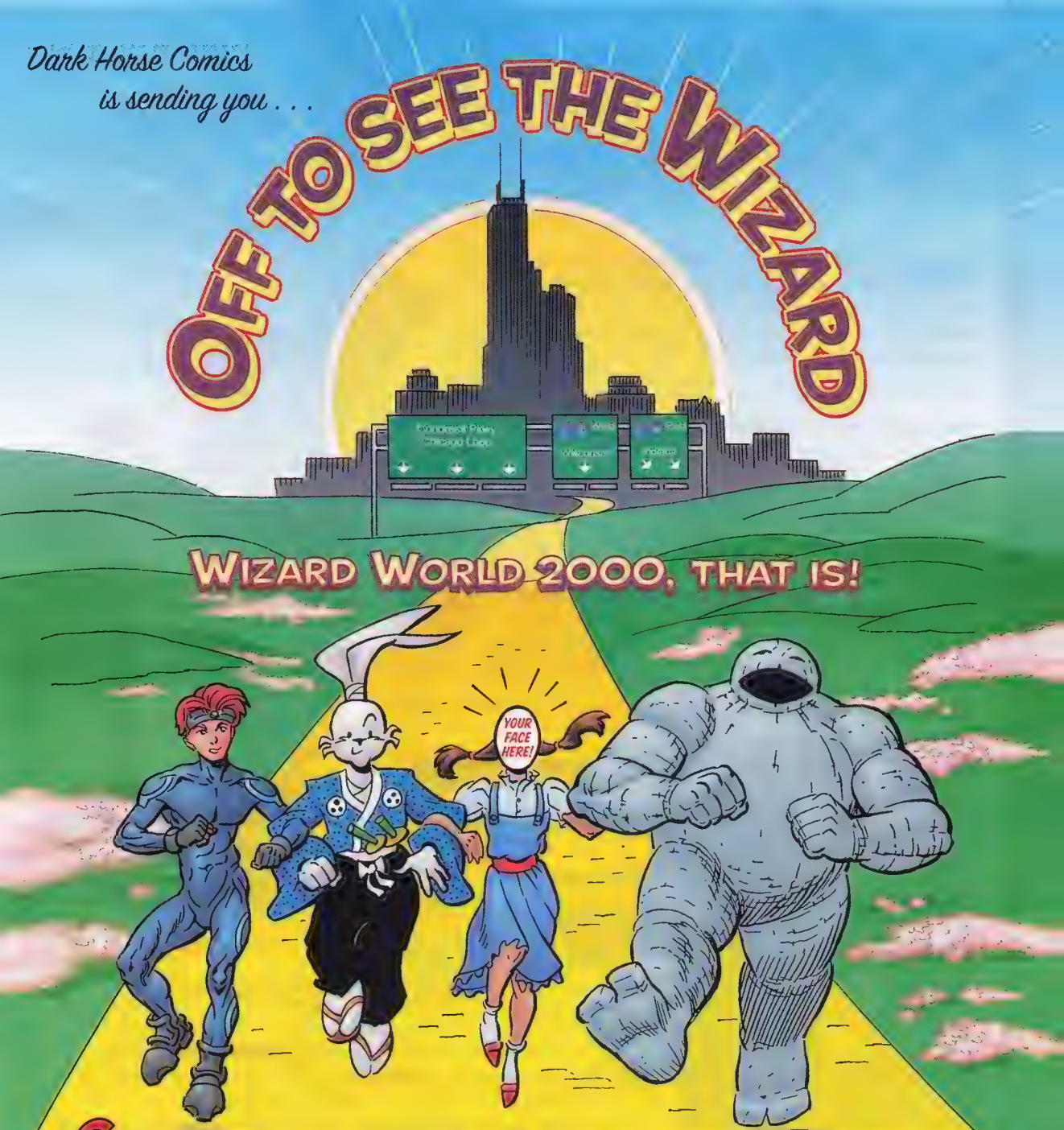
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WIZARD WORLD™ CHICAGO 2000

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stuff

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By the *Wizard* Staff

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Who among us doesn't like stuff? Whether it's Man-Thing Fertilizer, Ant-Man's Roach Motel or the Shaggy Man's Dandruff Shampoo, we're all suckers for comic-related merchandise. Each month, *Wizard* strives to show you the latest and super-coolest in comic book statues, posters, pins, magnets, shirts and other goodies. In short, if it's cool and it's stuff, you'll find it here. But you can only get it at your local comic book store.

IN A FLASH... WORLDS COLLIDE!

What? How can this be? Two Flashes? That's right, that immortal moment from *Flash* #123—the issue that introduced parallel worlds to the DC Universe—has been captured on a new statue by DC Comics. The Flash of Two Worlds Medium Statue ($195) stands 11" tall on an 8" X 11 3/4" base and comes hand-painted in cold-cast porcelain. Sculpted by Tim Bruckner and based on artwork by Carmine Infantino and Murphy Anderson, look for it August 30.

BEAMER "Don't worry, sir, we'll save y–heyyyy, is that a hot dog stand over there?"

GOLDFINGER Yep, she's a natural gold.

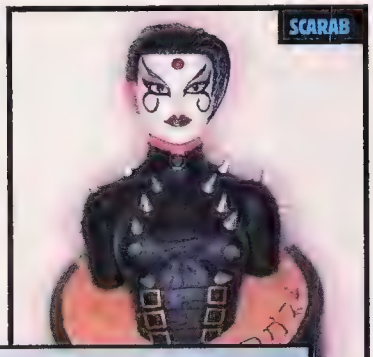
GILDA LOOKS AS GOOD AS GOLD

The third time's the charm, and Frank Miller and Dark Horse prove it with the newest Sin City Dames: Gilda print. The third in the latest series of three, Gilda's etched in black and splashed with metallic gold highlights. Standing 24" X 36", this beauty can be yours June 14 for a mere $25.

MOORE THE MERRIER

Clayburn Moore and Moore Creations bring you two beautiful busts bearing two beautiful ladies. From *Strangers in Paradise* comes the lovely Katchoo, that charming yet ferocious blonde. Not to be outdone, however, is the deadly Scarab from *Kabuki*, a member of the secret Noh agency. And she's definitely as dangerous as she is beautiful. Each bust stands at least 4" tall and retails for $39. What Moore could you want?

KATCHOO



SCARAB

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"COME AND GET ME."
-A POWER-MAD THANOS TO THE ENTIRE MARVEL UNIVERSE, INFINITY GAUNTLET #4

HOTSTUFF!!!

stuff

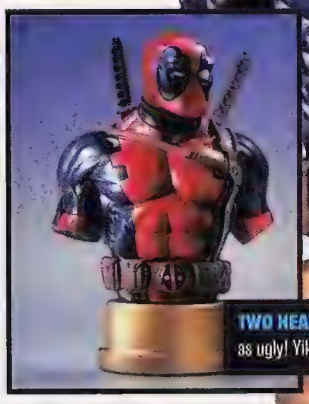
STATUE SUPREME

When Alan Moore and Alex Ross team up on anything, it's bound to be good. And Awesome Entertainment and Dynamic Forces' Supreme Statue lives up to that lofty billing. This piece, sculpted by Joe Devito, stands 8" X 9" and has Supreme in a thoughtful pose with his super dog Radar. As an added bonus, the statue comes with a print painted and signed by Ross based on designs by Moore. A must-have for fans of either creator. Look for it this May for $149.95.

GOOD DOG "You know, Radar, I never liked Krypto..."

DOUBLE THE DEADPOOL

Bowen Designs shoots out a brand-new mini-bust of the Merc with a Mouth, Deadpool. Only this time, he comes with two interchangeable heads, including one featuring the not-so-pretty complexion of Wade Wilson. Someone call a dermatologist! Limited to just 5,000 copies, you can pick this baby up in May for $40.



TWO HEADS are twice as ugly! Yikes!

TEACHER'S PET

Banzai! Coming from Dark Horse on June 21 is the second Usagi Yojimbo statue. This one features a young Usagi on the shoulder of his sensei, the mountain hermit Katsuichi, who trained Usagi in sword fighting. This eight-inch statue comes in a full-colored collector's box with a mini-sketchbook by Usagi creator Stan Sakai. This baby'll set you back $79.95, but your soul will achieve perfect harmony.

ECLECTIC GRAPHITTI

Sure Graphitti Designs always makes cool T-shirts, but this month we thought we'd spotlight a few that might've slipped under your radar. The first is the Golden Age Flash shirt, either short-sleeve (L-XL $17.95, XXL $20.95) or long (L-XL $23.95, XXL $26.95). The second? A Union Jack (remember him from *The Invaders*?) T-shirt that totally rocks! For that baby, L-XL run $17.95, and XXL will set you back $20.95.

SHIRTS 'R' US Like 'em? Buy 'em! Wear 'em!

Check your local stores for availability of all these funky-fresh products. Or ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special order 'em for ya!

YO! Are you a company who sells stuff cool enough to make the grade here? Let us be the judges of that. Send any info and/or samples to:

Stuff for "Stuff"
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

THE GREATEST quotes

"IT HAS SEVERAL SETTINGS. SEE THIS DIAL? LOOSE...WATERY...PROLAPSE."
—*SPIDER JERUSALEM TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, BEFORE USING A BOWEL DISRUPTOR ON HIM IN A BATHROOM,* TRANSMETROPOLITAN *#4*

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EARTH X #1/2 OFFER

Now that the series has ended, find out some answers to the questions *Earth X* raised! Only in this exclusive offer will you discover the fate of the Punisher! Daredevil! And the story of SHIELD head honcho Nick Fury! And that's not all, fanboys—you'll also learn the story behind the exposé of Spider-Man! This story takes place between issue #0 and issue #1 (naturally). The only way you can learn Marvel's secret future history is if you fill out the coupon, enclose three bucks and mail it in today!

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THIS OFFER EXPIRES JULY 21, 2000

video game STUFF

2ND COMING

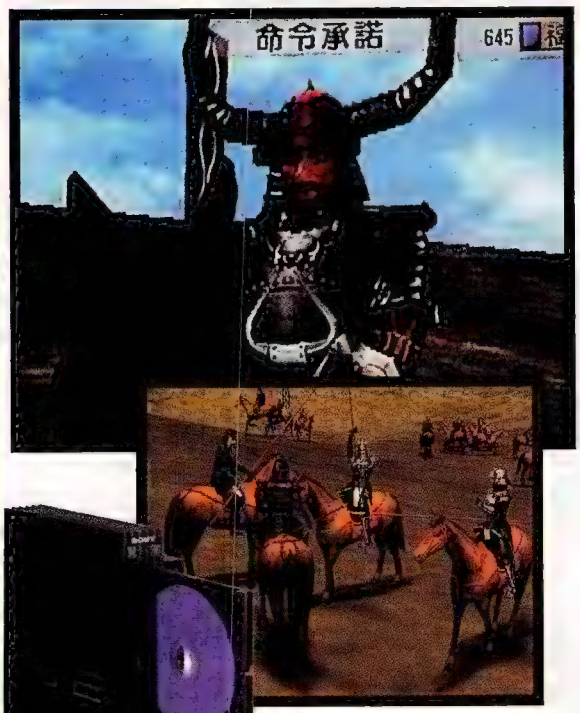
PS2 hits Japan: Headed for U.S. this fall

It's here.

March 4 marked the release of the long-awaited PlayStation2 in Japan, and a staggering one million units were sold in the first weekend alone.

The PS2's scheduled to debut in the U.S. this fall. In case you were wondering what games to look forward to, here's a list of titles expected for U.S. release as of this writing:

Armored Core 2–Build your own giant fighting robots! (Software/TBA)
Bloody Roar 3–Fight as the beast of your choice. (Sony/TBA)
Bomberman 2001–The lovable, destruction-happy gnome returns. (Atlus/TBA)
The Bouncer–An incredibly stylish, go-anywhere 3-D fighter. (Square/TBA)
Dark Cloud–Mix *Zelda* with *Populous* in this intriguing sim-RPG. (Sony/TBA)
Dead or Alive 2–The bouncing, fighting babes of *DoA* return, in multileveled 3-D environments. (Tecmo/TBA)



TWICE AS NICE PlayStation2 is sure to rock the gaming world.

Dino Crisis 2–Kill more dinosaurs. Period. (Capcom/TBA)
Dreamland Chronicles–A mysterious, yet beautiful action/adventure. (Bethesda Softworks/Q4 2000)
Duke Nukem–Duke's back and badder than ever. (GT/TBA)
Eternal Ring–First-person RPG from the makers of *King's Field*. (Software/TBA)
Evergrace–*Zelda*-style third-person RPG. (Software/TBA)
Exterminator–*Syphon Filter* meets *Resident Evil* in this panic adventure. (Sony/TBA)
Fantavision–Odd, fireworks-based puzzle game with lots of pretty particles. (Sony/TBA)
Final Fantasy X–The first *FF* to arrive on PS2. (Sony/TBA)
Final Fantasy XI–The online-only edition of the classic RPG. (Sony/TBA)
Getaway–Drive a getaway car through tons of environments. (Rockstar/TBA)
Gradius III & IV–The newest titles in the classic shooter series return, arcade-perfect. (Konami/TBA)
IQ Remix–The strange puzzle game gets a PS2 makeover. (Sony/TBA)
Kessen–Kurasawa would be proud of the scale of this strategy game set in feudal Japan. (Koei/TBA)
Metal Gear Solid 2–Snake returns in the best-looking *Metal Gear* yet. (Konami/Q4 2000)
Midnight Club: Street Racer–Illegally race the streets of real cities. (Rockstar/TBA)
Ninja Gaiden–The classic arcade ninja gets a 128-bit update. (Konami/TBA)
Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee–Abe and friends return in an odd mix of RPG and real-time strategy. (Infrogames/September 2000)
Onimusha–This samurai adventure mixes *Resident Evil* with feudal Japan. (Capcom/TBA)
Resident Evil–Little's known about this newest incarnation. (Capcom/TBA)
Ridge Racer V–Possibly the most beautiful racing game ever. (Nacmo/September)
Silent Hill 2–The sequel to one of the most disturbing games ever made. (Konami/Q4 2000)
Star Ocean 3–The newest installment in the dense RPG series. (Sony/TBA)
Street Fighter EX3–The familiar *Street Fighter* formula, in 3-D. (Capcom/September)
Summoner–The immense PC RPG makes its way to PS2. (THQ/Q4 2000)
Tekken Tag Tournament–Fight 2-on-2 in the pinnacle of the *Tekken* series. (Namco/September)
The World is Not Enough–Save the Earth again as Bond returns. (EA/TBA)
Virtual Ocean–This ocean simulator looks as intriguing as it does soothing. (Crave/Q1 2001)
X-Fire–Pronounced "Crossfire," this 3-D adventure will have lots of big explosions. (EA/TBA) ■ **JERRY DORSEY**

GREATEST quotes

"I OFFER YOU MY CONGRATULATIONS. YOUR WILL TO LIVE IS ASTONISHING. BUT IT ULTIMATELY CHANGES NOTHING. YOUR WORLD MUST DIE. AS YOUR SUPERGIRL DIED. AS YOUR FLASH DIED. AS SO MANY OTHERS WHO HAVE TRIED TO STOP ME DIED."
–ANTI-MONITOR TO DC'S HEROES, AFTER TRANSPORTING EARTH TO THE ANTI-MATTER UNIVERSE, CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS *#12*

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OUR BODYGUARD? We'd never leave the house.

PAMELA ANDERSON LEE PHOTO COURTESY CORBIS-OUTLINE

THE V.I.P. TREATMENT

Ubi Soft recently announced the development of a series of games based on the hit TV show "VIP," starring Pamela Anderson Lee. The as-yet unnamed titles will span PC, PlayStation, PlayStation2, N64, Dolphin, Game Boy Color, Game Boy Advance, Dreamcast and X-Box, and will put players in the role of Lee's character, bodyguard Val Irons, as she protects various stars in numerous exotic locales.

The PC, PlayStation and Dreamcast versions—which will be 3-D adventure games á la *Tomb Raider*—are scheduled for release in October, with the rest to follow over the following few months. ■ JD

THE GREATEST VIDEO GAMES

THE BEST OF THE BEST

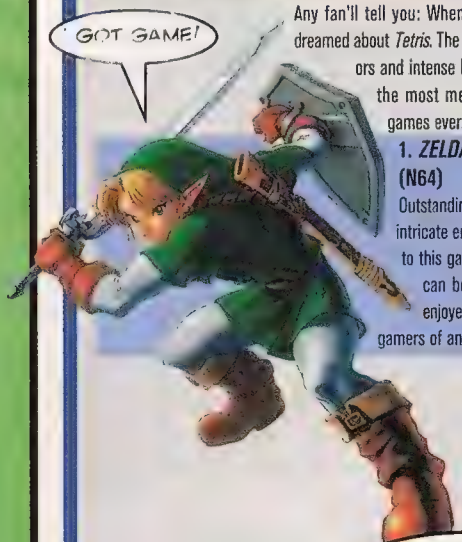
We play an awful lot of video games around the *Wizard* offices, and after a meeting of our collective minds, we came up with the five greatest video games ever. This includes all systems and all titles. And some of 'em might surprise ya...

5 *STREET FIGHTER 2* (All systems)
Still one of the best fighting games ever, this baby had tons o' moves and cool villains to beat on. And hey, the Street Fighter franchise even spawned a movie with Jean-Claude Van Damme! Okay, maybe keep *that* off the résumé...

4. *DOOM* (All systems)
The game that set the standard for first-person, 3-D shooters. Insane mazes, tons of horrible monsters and a spooky atmosphere make *Doom* a game to be played with the lights on.

3 *FINAL FANTASY VIII* (PlayStation)
Bar none, the best graphics available on any game, especially the cut scenes. And if you successfully made it through the roughly 60 hours of gameplay, you get an awesome 15-minute long CGI featurette at the end!

2. *TETRIS* (Nintendo)
Any fan'll tell you: When you played *Tetris*, you dreamed about *Tetris*. The haunting music, vivid colors and intense levels made *Tetris* one of the most memorable and addicting games ever.



1. *ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME* (N64)
Outstanding graphics and massively intricate environments are the gems to this game. This version of Zelda can be played–and thoroughly enjoyed–by novices or hard-core gamers of any age.

HAIL TO THE KING!

It's time to kick ass and chew bubblegum, and once again, Duke's all out of gum.

GT Interactive recently confirmed the release of the next Duke Nukem game for the PlayStation, *Duke Nukem: Planet of the Babes*.

The game will have more of a focus on story, with Duke engaged in a far-reaching campaign to save the Planet of the Babes from destruction. This setting will be "fully exploited," with players even taking on the roles of certain Babes for the trademark Dukematch modes. Expect the same over-the-shoulder *Tomb Raider*-style view as the previous game, though *POTB* will be entirely in hi-res, with a sharper look than most PlayStation titles so far. ■ JD

PLANET SMASHER The Babe planet's one place Duke doesn't mind nukin'.

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"AND A LEAN, SILENT FIGURE SLOWLY FADES INTO THE GATHERING DARKNESS, AWARE AT LAST THAT IN THIS WORLD, WITH GREAT POWER THERE MUST ALSO COME–GREAT RESPONSIBILITY." –*AS SPIDER-MAN REALIZES HE COULD'VE STOPPED THE MUGGER WHO KILLED HIS UNCLE BEN*, AMAZING FANTASY #15

BUFFY STAKES GAMING CLAIM

Everyone can bring home Buffy.

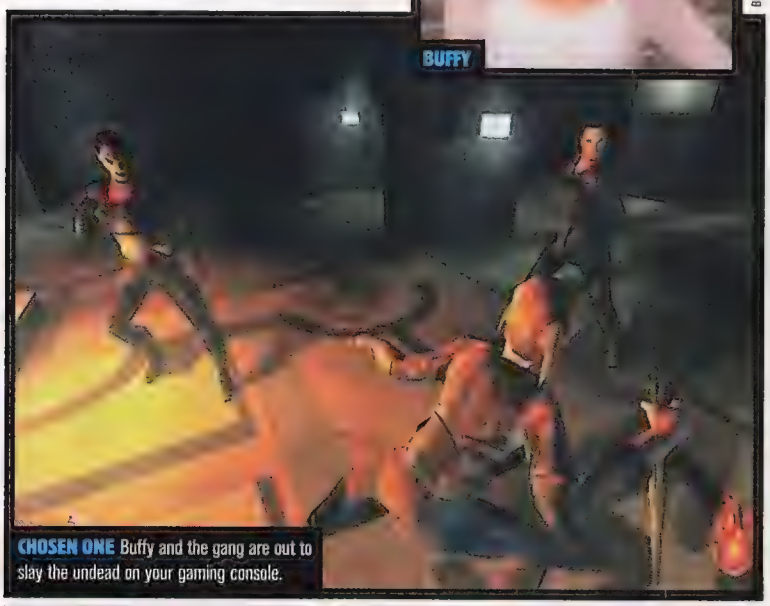
Fox Interactive announced recently its plans to produce a *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* game for the Dreamcast, PlayStation and the PC and have it on the market for fall 2000.

Fans will play as Buffy in a third-person, 3-D action-adventure game that pits her slaying powers, martial arts and healing ability against a legion of undead vampires. Joining Buffy will be her circle of allies, including Angel, Xander, Cordelia, Willow, Oz and Giles, as they fight the undead through many familiar Buffy environments, such as Sunnydale High, the cemetery and of course, the mall.

Stakes are extra, and Buffy likes 'em bloody! ■ JOHN B. LACEY

BUFFY

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER PHOTO COURTESY CORBIS-OUTLINE



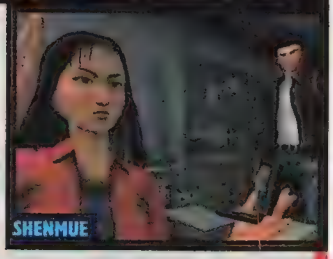
CHOSEN ONE Buffy and the gang are out to slay the undead on your gaming console.

ONTARGET

THIS MONTH'S CAN'T-MISS HIT

Call it a gamer's dozen.

Shenmue is a new experiment in gaming: a serial adventure expected to span more than twelve segments. Developed for the Dreamcast by Sega's legendary Yu Suzukiz (*Virtua Fighter* fame), the first installment was recently released in Japan and offers tons of hot features.



SHENMUE

Move over *Final Fantasy VIII*–this is the closest we've seen yet to a real interactive movie. This illusion is maintained by the use of "Quick Time Events," which bring back memories of *Dragon's Lair* as they put players in a streaming cinema requiring periodic split-second decisions.

It also includes lots of good ol' street brawling (complete with the ability to pick up miscellaneous objects and use them as weapons), plenty of adventure-game-style puzzles and item-collection quests, and a host of mini-game diversions including a well-stocked arcade (of course, since the game is set in 1986, the games may seem a bit dated!).

Shenmue: Chapter 1 is due in the U.S. this fall for the Dreamcast, with the rest of the series following swiftly behind. ■ JD

RUMBLINGS

THE NEWS AND RUMOR MILL

X MARKS THE SPOT Bill Gates unwrapped plans on Microsoft's X-Box console system, due to arrive sometime in 2001. The X-Box will spot double the total memory of the PlayStation 2 and can process over 300 million polygons per second, three times as much as PS2. The rendering is movie quality, and the X-Box includes Internet playability, an 8 GB hard drive and an 8 MB memory card.

'HARRY' ON DOLPHIN? Nintendo's reportedly looking to develop a *Harry Potter* game for its upcoming Dolphin system, timed to coincide with the "Harry Potter" feature film release sometime in 2001.

DINO-MITE! Expect Acclaim's sequel to *Turok 2*, *Turok 3: Shadow of Oblivion* this August or September for the Nintendo 64. *T3* will feature twenty single-player levels in five different environments, with forty different kinds of enemies and 24 upgradeable weapons, including the delightful-sounding Eviscerator and the Inferno Cannon.

PREPARE FOR 'NUCLEAR DAWN' Activision recently acquired the North American rights to Sony's action-adventure title, *Chase the Express*. Here in the U.S., the game will be called *Covert Ops: Nuclear Dawn*, and will allow players to take on the role of NATO soldiers defending a speeding bullet train from Russia to Paris. Too bad the terrorists on board are armed with multiple nukes. Get out the sun block, SPF 2,000,000!

ZELDA GETS NEW TITLE The *Legend of Zelda: Mask of Mujula* gets rechristened (again) with the title *Majora's Mask* and the reason: it's easier to pronounce! The title's set to ship April 27 in Japan and sometime this fall in North America.

GODDESS OF THE ARCADE Kosuke Fujishima's hit manga series *Ah: My Goddess* comes to the arcades thanks to NAOMI, but don't expect to see it in America. It's a bizarre mix of polygonal babes and trivia games. Maybe it'll show up at your local tavern. There's always hope.

FOREST OF FEAR Hunt for the Blair Witch on your PC this fall when Gathering of Developers releases three different Witch titles that tie into the movie mythos. No word yet on what genre of games the Witch titles will be, but rest assured that frights galore await you. ■

BLAIR WITCH

manga MANIA!

COOL JAPANESE COMIC AND ANIMATION NEWS YOU NEED TO KNOW...

'TOONAMI' ON RYE

Cartoon Network's weekday anime block expands this summer

This summer, the "Toonami" tidal wave gets even bigger.

Cartoon Network's popular afternoon "Toonami" block will expand to a whopping three hours starting June 5. The programming cluster, which currently runs weekdays from 4-6 p.m. EST and includes "Sailor Moon," "Ronin Warriors," "Dragonball Z" and "Gundam Wing," will add "Tenchi Muyo" in June. Episodes of "Batman: The Animated Series" will likely complete the lineup.

TOONAMI TALES WING Cartoon Network has made "Gundam Wing" the linchpin of its "Toonami" block.

A Cartoon Network spokesperson describes the folks who program "Toonami" as "huge anime fans." The arrival of "Gundam Wing" in March and "Tenchi Muyo," which was published here as *No Need for Tenchi*, are evidence of that—both series have enormous cult followings here in the U.S.

The network sees big potential in its anime offerings. "Toonami" is already one of the channel's highest-rated offerings, a strong second to the prime-time lineup, and a new episode of "Dragonball Z" last fall snared the highest rating in the network's history. While most of the channel's fare is aimed at kids between the ages of 6 and 11, "Toonami" skews higher. "As some of the Pokémon fans start to grow up a little bit, they feel that they're ready to graduate to shows like 'Dragonball Z,' " the spokesperson said.

And there's going to be plenty of "Dragonball Z" to go around. Ten new episodes start airing Saturday mornings in April, and fall will bring an astonishing 75 new episodes of the anime juggernaut.

There's plenty of room left for anime on the rest of the network, too. A late-night "Toonami" block called "Midnight Run," which in the past featured shows like "G Force" and "Speed Racer," might make its return. And "Toonami" should expand to weekends sometime this year. If that weren't enough "Toonami," the block will get its own Website before too much longer.

When it comes to anime on Cartoon Network, the sky's the limit. The addition of programming like "Tenchi" and "Gundam" "will only increase the appetite for really good anime," the spokesperson said.

We're drooling already. ■ **TOM ROOT**

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"SO MUCH FOR YOUR WILLPOWERED RING. RIGHT NOW YOU HAVE ALL THE WILLPOWER OF AN UNREPENTANT HEROIN ADDICT. I SHOULD SHOOT YOU RIGHT NOW, PURELY OUT OF MERCY. THERE. I JUST DID."
—PROMETHEUS TO FLASH AND GREEN LANTERN, AS HE SHOOTS GL IN THE CHEST, JLA #17

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PIKACHU GETS SOME SUMMER LOVIN'

Just when you thought it was safe to go back to the movies...

Following the (pocket) monster success of 1999's summer smash "Pokémon the First Movie," Warner Bros. has announced the sequel, "Pokémon the Movie 2000," will open July 21.

It's bad news for parents, who likened the first flick to an hour-and a-half-long root canal, but good news indeed for Warner: "Pokémon the First Movie" grossed $85 million, the sixth-biggest movie moneymaker of 1999.

In "Pokémon the Movie 2000," the Poké-universe is thrown out of whack by an evil force, and it's up to Ash Ketchum and the gang to set things right. The film introduces several new Pokémon, including Lugia, an almost godlike water creature. For a look at the trailer, check out the following Website: www.wbmovies.com/pokemon_2000/index.html.

Adding to this year's movie hype, *Pokémon* collectible card game publisher Wizards of the Coast will celebrate the film's release with four brand-new *Pokémon* trading cards, free with each ticket sold.

Guess what that means, Mom and Dad? Repeat viewings, and lots of 'em! Aw, don't cry. ■ TR

PIKA-TWO! One hundred more monsters equals millions of dollars.

BEST OF THE BEST

THE GREATEST ANIME

Call this Anime 101.

Class is in session, and if you consider yourself an anime fan, these are five properties that you should be familiar with:

5. 'AKIRA' Another title that revolutionized animation. This cyber-punk tale about Japanese bikers and a top-secret government project has been a classic since it hit our shores in manga form thanks to Marvel Comics in the late 1980s. The anime version is nothing short of miraculous, although a bit complex at times.

4. 'POKÉMON' That's right, traditionalists, Pokémon! The gaming sensation has conquered America, and you can't swing a dead cat in this country without hitting a kid who loves Pokémon. Fans of more adult anime may lift their noses at Pokémon, but the numbers don't lie–hundreds of monsters, legions of fans and millions of dollars.

3. 'RANMA 1/2' This cult favorite tells the twisted tale of a kung fu hero who switches gender when dowsed with water. It's been around since the late '80s, but it's really been picking up steam (and loads o' fans) in recent years.

2. 'GHOST IN THE SHELL' Simply put, "Ghost" is one of the best anime features every made.The story of super-cop Major Motoko Kusanagi, this classic from manga-master Masamune Shirow still leaves anime fans drooling with excitement.

1. 'MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM' Call it Japan's version of "Star Wars." Over 20 years of history swirl around the Gundam franchise, and it's still going strong today. It's a grand, cosmic soap opera about giant robots and teen love, and it's held in the same regard in Japan as George Lucas' creation is held here.

'CHASING AMY' ALL THE WAY TO JAPAN

Amy made it all the way across the globe.

It's only fitting that "Chasing Amy," written by a guy who fills his movies with comics fans, should itself be reborn as a comic book. Ironically, the comic does not inhabit the world from whence it came, a world of Hulks and Witchblades; instead, "Amy" settles its roots in the pretty-in-pink world of Japanese girls' manga.

Yep, Holden, Banky and Alyssa are back, slackin' and yelling as only Kevin Smith characters can. Of course, in the hands of artist Moyoko Anno and writer Kenichi Eguchi, plenty of changes have been made.

F'instance, the story is told from Alyssa's point of view, and all the characters have taken on the ethereal lankiness typical of *shôjo* manga (to check out Anno's work, surf to www.newsaskew.com/amymanga).

"Chasing Amy" is a hybrid comic and novel—only 30 percent of it consists of comic panels while the rest is a standard Japanese novel. Licensed by Aoyama Publishing, it's an odd duck, but one worth seeking out by fans of the movie. ■ PAUL SUDLOW

CULTURE SHOCK Sure hope Joey digs sushi...

THE GREATEST quotes

"LOOK YOU, LOKI, TO THE SKY! FOR THERE SOARS THE HAMMER OF THOR AND BY ROYAL ODIN'S DECREE, IT MUST RETURN TO MY HAND. NOTHING MAY BAR ITS WAY! NOT EVEN THE HEAD OF LOKI!"

—THOR, THREATENING TO LET MJOLNIR BEHEAD LOKI AS IT RETURNS TO HIS HAND FROM SPACE, THOR *#359*

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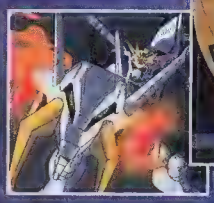

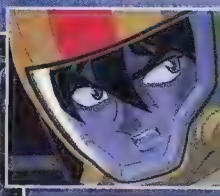

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manga MANIA!

BAT-MANGA!

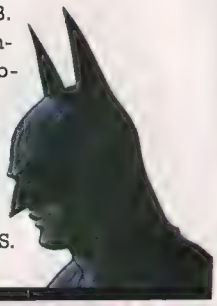
Like the Vapors sang back in the early '80s, Batman's turning Japanese.

Or at least turning to a Japanese artist.

Fan-favorite manga artist Kia Asamiya, creator of the manga hit *Dark Angel*, grew up devouring the Batman comics imported from the United States. Now he's living the dream as he writes and conducts the art chores for the Batman stories published by Kodansha, a Japanese publisher.

"A lot of Japanese can relate more to Batman than other heroes," said C.B. Cebulski, Asamiya's U.S. representative. "Manga isn't superhero-influenced, but Batman is a regular guy using his wits and skills to solve crime."

DC reportedly loves Asamiya's manga-influenced style so much there are plans to translate the story for a U.S. release in the future. ■ **MIKE COTTON**



ANIMEBUZZBOX

JAPANESE RUMOR MILL

'NAZCA' IN THE MIDDLE Trying to place that anime snippet in the opening credits of the Fox network's rookie sitcom "Malcolm in the Middle"? It's "Nazca," a swords-and-sorcery series about a present-day guy named Kyoji who discovers he has the soul of a 500-year-old Inca warrior. It's currently being released domestically by Pioneer.

'X' MAKES MARK Manga Entertainment's dubbed release of the Armageddon thriller "X" will make a brief theatrical tour before its VHS and DVD release later this year–making it one of the few chances in the U.S. to see anime on the big screen. Animated by the all-female superteam CLAMP and directed by Rintaro of "Astro Boy" fame, "X" is a can't-miss. Head over to www.manga.com for the theatrical release dates.

'MONONOKE' GOES DIGITAL The DVD edition of director Hayao Miyazaki's masterpiece "Princess Mononoke," released in U.S. theaters last year via Miramax, is scheduled for release June 13. The disc will feature both English and Japanese language tracks, as well as the theatrical trailer and a bonus Miramax is calling a "featurette."

ANIME INVADES DISNEY The United States' largest anime and manga convention, Anime Expo, will take over the Disneyland Hotel and Convention Center in Anaheim, Calif. from June 30-July 3. Last year's con drew a record crowd of 6,400. As the show approaches, click on www.anime-expo.org as more guests, features and panels are announced.

QUICK HITS Bandai's producing 26 episodes of "Escaflowne" for Fox Kids new Saturday morning lineup. It's the story of a precognitive young girl and a mysterious swordsman who must solve the mystery of the Escaflowne, a powerful battlesuit that can save their homeland. . . "Star Cars" tells the story of a deadly car race in an apocalyptic future. It's from Ameko Entertainment and Hyper Image, and is described as "American anime." Production is scheduled to start early next year. ■ **TR**

CRASHCOURSE

SCHOOL'S IN SESSION

DRAGONBALL

All across Asia and Europe, Dragonball has dominated its way to indisputably becoming the most popular anime and manga title available.

It's already amassed a cult following here. Pretty soon, America will be among the conquered as well.

The DB mythos has already spawned three distinct series: "Dragonball" (1995), "Dragonball Z," and "Dragonball GT" (1997). If you want to be a *true* DB master, here's a bunch of tidbits you better know about the series:

>> The Dragonball series is based upon an ancient Chinese folktale called "Journey to the West: The Legend of the Monkey King." The creator, Akira Toriyama, actually based Gokuu on the Monkey King from the Shinto religion, which is based on ancient Chinese philosophies.

>> If you don't like dubbed and edited Dragonball cartoons on the WB or UPN, Hawaiian TV has subtitled all three Dragonball series in English, intact. Just find a penpal in the Aloha state, and maybe you can locate the more authentic episodes.

>> There are 153 episodes of the original "Dragonball." That doesn't include movies and OAVs (original animation videos), so start collecting now. The most immensely popular series from Dragonball, "DBZ" produced 291 episodes. Not as popular as the other two series, there were only 64 episodes of "Dragonball GT."

>> The early episodes of Dragonball definitely have a perverted tone (look into the dirty old man, the Turtle Elder) to them, and its no surprise that Bloomer, Gokuu's female buddy, has a name which translates into "girl's underwear" in Japanese.

>> In the original "DB" series, Gokuu marries his childhood friend, ChiChi, who gives birth to Gohan, who appears in "DBZ."

>> Always wondered why some pics of Gokuu showed him with blond hair? Well, when he's angry, he transforms into a Super Saiya-jin, a more powerful person complete with a change in appearance. He gains blond hair, green eyes, and a less goofy looking face.

>> If you're not interested in watching "Dragonball" in English in America, Spanish stations across the U.S. show Dragonball in Spanish, while Chinese video shops have Cantonese language versions, and Korean TV shows their own dubbed versions.

>> Gokuu isn't from Earth; actually he's an alien sent from another planet to take over our planet. But, when he was sent here, he crash landed here and lost his memory. Thus, he's now a good guy.

>> Gokuu's son, Gohan, fights crime when Gokuu dies temporarily in "DBZ." Oddly enough, Gohan ends up going to college at the end of the "DBZ" series, marries Videl and has a child named Pan. ■ **MIKE SHIN**

THE SHLATTUM QUOTIENT

"ALL I'VE EVER BEEN GOOD AT IS KILLING, SO I MIGHT AS WELL ENJOY IT."
–*MARV*, SIN CITY

MANGA ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

"Fast & Furious...a hilarious mix of Hitchcock and the Marx Brothers"
Jeff Menell -The Hollywood Reporter

THE CASTLE OF CAGLIOSTRO

• DIGITALLY MASTERED PICTURE AND SOUND!
• BRAND NEW ENGLISH DUB AND SUBTITLED VERSIONS!

Master thief Lupin III, a.k.a. "The Wolf," and his right-hand gunman Jigen are hot on the trail of a double-crossing counterfeiter. But when their search leads them to the secluded European country of Cagliostro, they find far more than they bargained for.

Written and directed by acclaimed Japanese animation master Hayao Miyazaki (Princess Mononoke, Kiki's Delivery Service) anime fans will enjoy this action-packed escapade which Steven Spielberg once called one of the greatest adventure movies of all time.

DVD SPECIAL FEATURES: Digitally Mastered • Scene Index • Dolby Digital Stereo • Original Theatrical Trailer • In English, Japanese and Japanese with English subtitles • Manga 2000 previews • Manga Web Link • DVD Catalog

In Stores: 04-25-00

DVD: $29.95 VHS: $19.95 ENGLISH DUBBED $29.95 SUBTITLED

Genre: Comedy/Action-Adventure. Not Rated. Suitable for most audiences. VHS • Color Stereo • 100 Minutes

DEVILMAN

"Fantastic horror that may well touch upon the outer limits of the human imagination." -Animerica

The Ultimate in Demonic Horror from the Classic Manga of Go Nagai now available on DVD!

Contains both volumes "The Birth" and "Demon Bird"

DVD SPECIAL FEATURES
Digitally Mastered • Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound in English • Scene Index • Go Nagai Bio & Filmography • Photo Gallery • Original Trailer • Manga Video Previews • Manga Video Web Link

In Stores: 04-25-00 DVD: $29.95

Genre: Horror/Action. Not Rated. For Mature Audiences. Contains graphic violence, nudity and adult situations. 120 Minutes

PERFECT BLUE

"An amazing feat of animation, a stylish psychological thriller" -Kevin Thomas, LA Times

In the tradition of great suspense masters, director Satoshi Kon (Memories), special advisor Katsuhiro Otomo (Akira) and Madhouse Studios (Ninja Scroll), bring Yoshikazu Takeuchi's thrilling suspense novel to the screen, in a tour de force that brings animation to a bold new level.

DVD SPECIAL FEATURES:
• Digitally Mastered • Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound English and Japanese • In English, Japanese and Japanese with English subtitles • Interview with Director Satoshi Kon Voice-actor Interviews • Original Theatrical Trailer • Musical Photo Gallery • Behind-the-Scenes Performances • Bonus Audio Track • Manga 2000 Previews • Manga 2000 Fan Club Info • Manga Web Link

Genre: Drama/Horror. Unrated Director's Cut. For Mature Audiences. Contains graphic violence, nudity and adult situations. 90 Minutes

In Stores: 04-25-00 DVD: $29.95

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★★★★★ -GAMER'S REPUBLIC
"AMAZING" -ANIMEXPRESS "FANTASTIC" -PROTOCULTURE ADDICTS

At the edge of the millennium the concluding battle for humanity's future is staged. Kamui Shirou's destiny has been decided as he returns to Tokyo to face his ultimate challenge.

"X" the animated feature film is based on the manga series by CLAMP (Magic Knights Rayearth, Tokyo Babylon) creating a visual mix of stylish gothic flair with exhilarating supernatural action sequences. Don't miss "X"!!!

For "X" theatrical dates in your area visit www.manga.com
Check out the world premiere of the "X" theatrical trailer only at www.sputnik7.com

R

www.manga.com

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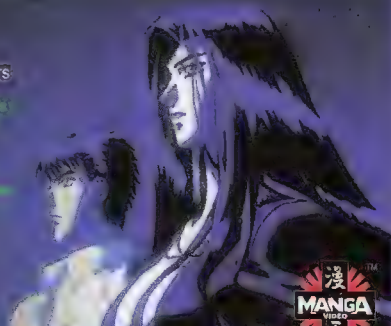


MANGA VIDEO

TOWER RECORDS • VIDEO • BOOKS

Manga DVD and VHS available at Tower Records and other fine stores.

INTERNATIONAL CHANNEL ADDS ANIME LINEUP

Hardcore "Dragonball Z" fans, here's your ticket to paradise.

Cable television's International Channel, home to 'round-the-clock programming in 20 different languages, is also home to uncut, undubbed and unsubtitled episodes of "Dragonball Z" in the original Japanese. That might make the series a little harder to understand for *gaijin* viewers, but it also means fans of the series can finally see it without the heavy content editing the U.S. version endured. The series airs Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. EST and Sundays at 9 p.m. EST.

International Channel seems to be shaping up as a prime source of anime programming. The network currently airs a half-hour "Youth Anime" installment Sundays at 8 a.m. EST, and plans on airing even more anime Monday through Wednesday at 1 a.m. EST starting in April.

The best part? New anime series will include English subtitles! The bad news? International Channel is currently available in a mere eight million homes. Time to call the cable company... ■ TR

LIKE A REI OF LIGHT

As the English voice of one of anime's top babes, the mysterious Rei Ayanami from "Neon Genesis Evangelion," actress Amanda Winn Lee is the closest thing the U.S. has to an anime superstar.

So what's it like to be an anime goddess? Read on...

Have you had any rabid, drooling stalkers?

A very avid fanboy wrote to me *every day for a month!* He was like 14, and he wrote, "Please send me your photo, I bet you're beautiful, I bet you're amazing!" Finally I sent him one of my headshots. The day he gets the photo, he writes, "I got your picture. Thank you very much. By the way, do you have [*Evangelion* voice actress] Allison Keith's address?" And I never heard from him again.

You've studied acting since you were 5. Any weird acting exercises you've had to do?

Once during callback we listened to this one Elvis song for five hours. To this day I can't listen to the soundtrack for "Blue Hawaii."

What's it like being Rei Ayanami, idol of millions?

It's amazing. It'd be lying if I said I didn't absolutely love it. I have to say, though, Rei's popularity puzzles me. I understand the whole, "Oh, she's this great enigma and that makes her fascinating." But she's also been the subject of a lot of *dejenshi* [fan-created manga porn]. What is it about this catatonic clone that makes everyone go, "Mmm, gotta bag that babe"? I don't understand that. ■ TR

REI AYANAMI

HOT IMPORTS

CAN'T MISS MANGA & ANIME

MANGA

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL #45 (Dark Horse) Rin fights her way through the checkpoint out of Edo with a plan so crazy you won't believe it. $2.95

DARK ANGEL #13 (CPM Manga) The Dark Angel story began here as Lin fights to recover the golden orb. $2.95

DARK ANGEL: PHOENIX RESURRECTION #1 (Image) In the land of Four Winds, chaos reigns and only the Phantom Saints can keep the peace in tact. $2.95

DEADLY CURVE: GUN CRISIS PRELUDE #3 (Ironcat) As a new drug hits the streets, a recovering junkie helps Inagaki track down the supplier. $2.95 Mature Readers

DRAGONBALL Z PART 3 #4 (Viz) Returning to the origin world of the Dragon Balls brings excitement and danger to Kuririn, Gohan and Bulma. $2.95

GUNDAM WING POCKET MIXX VOLUME 1 (Mixx Entertainment) In the year A.C. 195, a network of space-based rebels fight oppression. $9.95

GUNSMITH CATS: BEAN BANDITS TP (Dark Horse) Bounty hunter Rally Vincent tracks down killer and other assorted bad guys. MR $16.95

GUNSMITH CATS KIDNAPPED #7 (Dark Horse) Shot and kidnapped, Rally makes a desperate play for freedom. $2.95

GUNSMITH CATS: BEAN BANDITS TP

MAGICAL POKÉMON JOURNEY #3: POKÉMON HOLIDAY (Viz Communications) Pikachu agrees to deliver a mirror for Christmas but accidentally breaks it. $4.95

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: 0079 VOLUME 1 TP (Viz) A space civil war ensues when a colony declares its independence from Earth in this adaptation of the classic anime movie. $15.95

STEAM DETECTIVE: PUSHING PENCILS (Fanboy) This Kia Asamiya sketch book takes fans through the process of making a manga book. $3.95

ANIME

BUBBLEGUM CRISIS–2040 VOLUME 5 VIDEOS (ADV Films) Linna must make a choice between her family and her friends when a trip back home has surprising repercussions. Dubbed–$19.98; Subtitled–$29.95

COWBOY BEBOP VOLUME 10 VIDEOS (Pioneer) The boys go up against a group of pirates who steal whatever they see. Dubbed–$19.98; Subtitled–$24.98

GUNDAM WING VOLUME 1: SHOOTING STARS VIDEOS AND DVD (Pioneer) Five young pilots control suits of armor to help their space colonies break free of oppressive rule. Dubbed–$14.98; Subtitled: $19.98; DVD–$24.98

MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH SEASON II VIDEOS (Anime Works) Assaulted by all sides Hikaru, Umi and Fuu are summoned to find and protect a new pillar before it's destroyed. $24.98

RANMA 1/2, MARTIAL MAYHEM VOL. 7: THREE GIRLS, A GUY, AND A (JAPANESE) PIZZA PLACE (Viz) Two new episodes, including Ranma going into public as a girl one too many times $24.95

SLAYERS TRY MAJESTIC JOURNEY VIDEOS (U.S. Manga Corps) Beast men and a horde of demons threaten the careers of four want-to-be rockers. $19.99

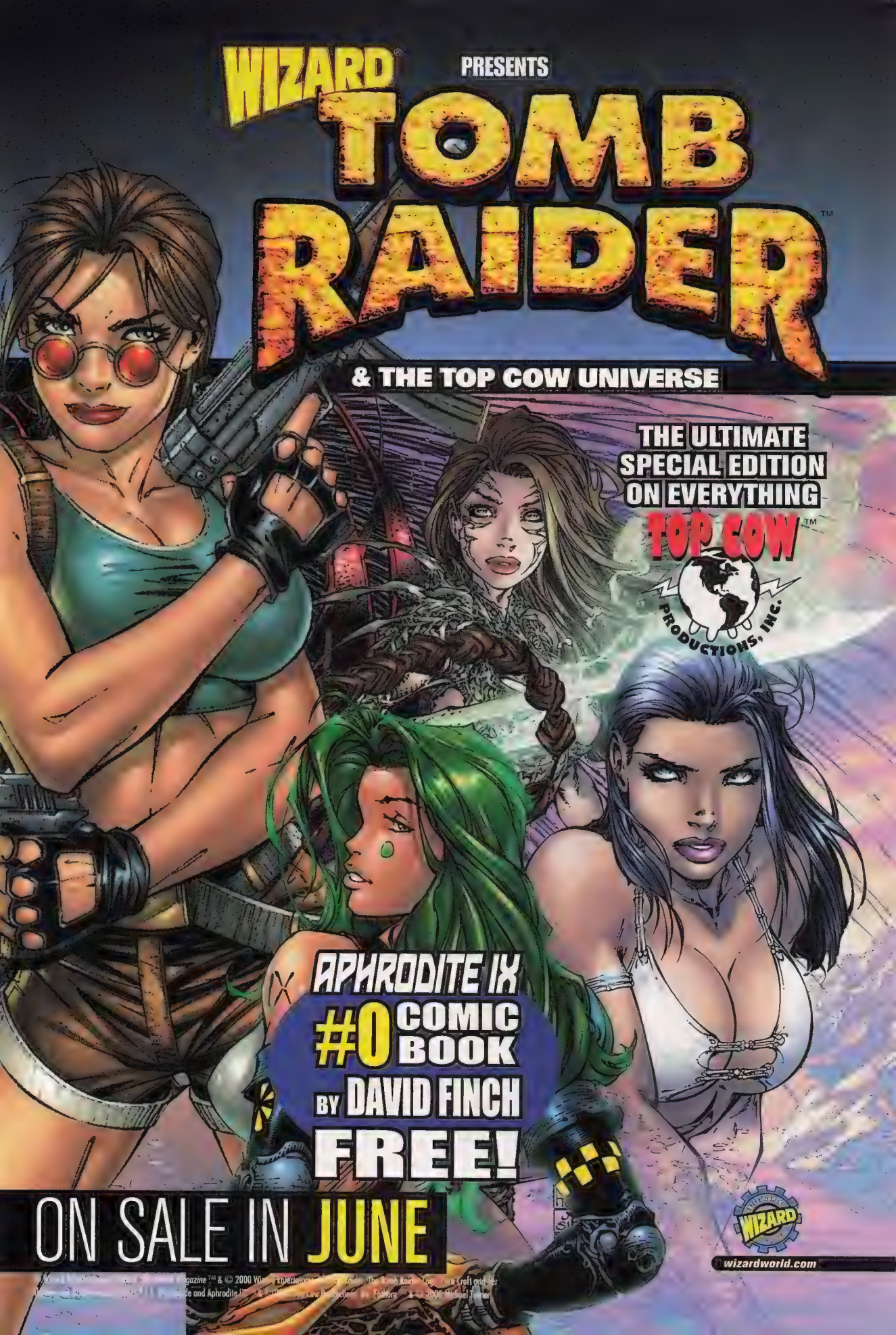
TRIGUN VOLUME II: LOST PAST VIDEOS AND DVD (Pioneer) A reckless quest for revenge and rewards lead Vash to happiness and peace. $24.98

VISION OF ESCAFLOWNE VOLUME 1 VIDEOS DUBBED (Pioneer) Strange visions lead a high school girl into a deadly game. $19.98

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"RUN, YOU WEAK, HELPLESS MORTALS! FLEE IN TERROR BEFORE THE RIGHTFUL WRATH OF NAMOR! THUS SHALL ALL OF MANKIND ONE DAY SHRIEK IN PANIC AT THE COMING OF THE SUB-MARINER!"

–A RAGING SUB-MARINER TO A GROUP OF ESKIMOS AS HE TOSSES THE ICE BLOCK HOLDING CAPTAIN AMERICA BACK INTO THE OCEAN, AVENGERS *(VOL.1) # 4*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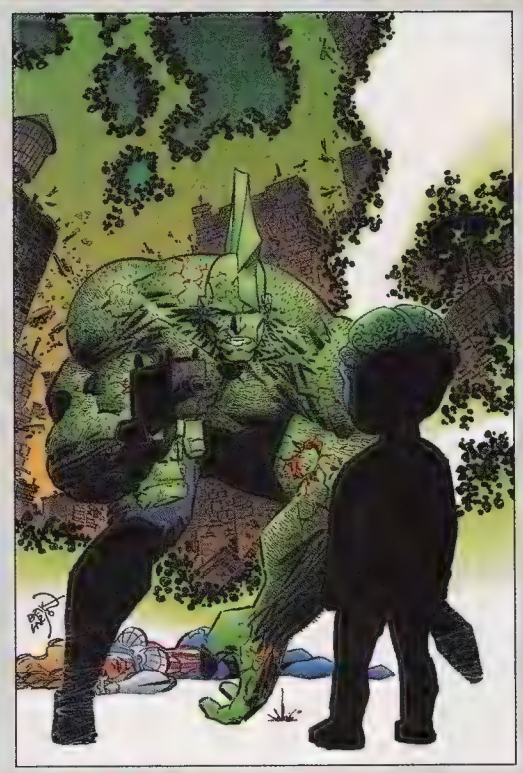
PICKS

THE MUST-READ COMICS SHIPPING IN MAY

book of the month



SAVAGE DRAGON #75

IMAGE You liked those first 74 issues of *Dragon*? Embrace their supple curves, because they're history, as far as the Dragon's memory is concerned. When The Finned One offs a child that would've eventually wrecked his life in the future, a new reality settles in. "At the end of this issue, the world is changing," warns Erik Larsen, "and in issue #76, Dragon wakes up and the world is different." How different? Set apart from the Image Universe and "As different as the world we live in from 'Planet of the Apes,'" sez Erik. Damn dirty Dragon! By Larsen. $4.95 (shipping late May)

AVENGERS BOOKS

MARVEL Ass-kickers assemble! *Avengers 2000* (shipping May 10) continues from *Thunderbolts 2000*, with one Avenger coming back from the realm of the undead. *Avengers Two: Wonder Man and the Beast* #3 (of 3, May 17) concludes the duo's trip to the West Coast, where It, The Living Colossus lives again. And in *Avengers* #30 (May 31), Kulan Gath has to deal with an invasion from Costa Verde, led by the spandex patrol. By a bunch of talented individuals. **$3.50**—*2000*; **$2.99**—*Avengers Two*; **$2.25**—*Avengers*

BATMAN BOOKS

DC COMICS More Bat-tales than a witch's brew. In *Detective Comics* #746 (May 10), Whisper's actions cause Gotham's crime organizations to get worked up into a lather. In *Batman/Huntress: Cry for Blood* #2 (of 6, May 10), the Huntress continues to look like the prime suspect in a series of murders. After you read both of these Greg Rucka-written tomes, check out *Batman 80-Page Giant* #3 (May 10). Calendar Man's pissed for missing the turn of the millennium! **$2.50**—*Detective*, *Huntress*; **$5.95**—*Giant*

BATMAN: DARK VICTORY #8 (OF 13)

DC COMICS "Memories..." Bruce takes in a night at the circus and meets up with a spunky little boy. Just when things are getting interesting, the Joker threatens to blow everything up. Bugger. By Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale. **$2.95** (May 24)

BIRDS OF PREY #19

DC COMICS Oracle's a popular girl, but not for the reasons you'd expect. All the guys in her life pay her a visit at the same time. If that ain't enough excitement for you, Black Canary gets into some trouble while investigating a weapons lab. By Chuck Dixon and Butch Guice. **$1.99** (May 10)

CAPTAIN AMERICA #31

MARVEL Girls have a thing for guys with a big "A" on their foreheads. In some parts of the world, it means you're disease-free. To Sharon Carter, everything about Cap makes him oh-so appealing. Watch as their love blossoms. By Dan Jurgens, Andy Kubert and Dan Green. **$2.25** (May 24)

"DEATH. MAYBE."
–CAPTAIN AMERICA, WHEN ASKED BY A TROUBLED HANK PYM WHAT WOULD CAUSE HIM TO STOP BEING A HERO, THE LAST AVENGERS STORY *#1*

CAPTAIN MARVEL #7

MARVEL Comet Man? Is that a bathtub scrubber mascot? No, silly. It's the new hero that pops in to warn Captain Marvel of nefarious goings-on with someone who knows CM's father, Captain Mar-Vell. It's cosmic fun by Peter David, Chrisscross and Anibal Rodriguez. **$2.50** (May 24)

DAREDEVIL #14

MARVEL The life story of Wilson Fisk gets detailed here, from depressing youth to maniacal crime lord. We bet all the kids called him Chubby or Pork-Chop, or said, "Hey, Fatty, you're blocking the sun." No doubt they'd all be dead by now. By David Mack, Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti. **$2.99** (May 31)

EMPIRE #1

GORILLA/IMAGE Golgoth sure does have it rough. He's got the world in his hands, but enemies in and out of his government are threatening to throw him out on his royal bum. Thrill to the political maneuvering and fight scenes! By Mark Waid and Barry Kitson. **$2.50** (late May)

HOURMAN #16

DC COMICS Remember hero groupie Snapper Carr? No? Consider yourself blessed. In this issue, Hourman walks down memory lane with Snapper, recalling his hideous betrayal of the JLA to the Joker. Angst-tastic! By Tom Peyer, Rags Morales and David Meikis. **$2.50** (May 24)

IRON MAN #30

MARVEL "In this issue, the armor and Tony have to come to terms with who the boss is," muses writer Joe Quesada. "Over the years, the armor's become so sophisticated that it could function without him. So Tony has to rely on his wits and own human abilities to outwit the armor, and hopefully by doing that he discovers something about himself." Like where he left his pants. By Quesada, Alitha Martinez, Rob Hunter and Mark Pennington. **$2.25** (May 17)

newreleases

FIRST TIME OUT

BATMAN: IT'S JOKER TIME #1 (OF 3) **(DC Comics)** Three shrinks analyze Joker on national TV. **$4.95** (May 31)

CROSSGEN CHRONICLES #1 **(CROSSGEN Comics)** Blessed humans vs. deities with attitudes. **$3.95** (late May)

DARK CROSSINGS SPECIAL: DARK CLOUD RISING #1 **(Top Cow/Image)** Tomb Raider + Witchblade + The Darkness = Tons o' fun! **$5.95** (late May)

FANTASTIC FOUR: GRIMM AND LOGAN #1 (OF 3) **(Marvel)** Those two crazy kids meet up before their costumed-hero days. **$2.99** (May 31)

JOKER/MASK #1 (OF 4) **(Dark Horse)** Cancel Christmas! The Clown Prince gets hold of the Mask. **$2.95** (May 31)

JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA 100-PAGE SUPER SPECTACULAR #1 **(DC Comics)** Nostalgic collection of old-school JSA exploits. **$6.95** (May 10)

LADY DEATH BY STEVEN HUGHES #1 **(Chaos!)** A collection of pin-ups from the late artist. **$2.95** (late May)

THE MARQUIS: DANSE MACABRE #1 (OF 5) **(Oni Press)** Marquis can "see" damned souls, and sends 'em back. **MR.** **$2.95** (late May)

MARVELS BOOKS **(Marvel)** Do comic characters read comics? You bet. Check out the "fictional" versions of heroes this month, as they're portrayed on paper in the Marvel Universe: *Fantastic Four* #1, *Spider-Man* #1, *X-Men #1, Thor* #1, *Daredevil* #1 and *Captain America* #1. **$2.25** each (All books ship May 3)

NEVERMEN #1 (OF 4) **(Dark Horse)** A crime-bustin' team fights off killer apes and tries to save one of their own. **$2.95** (May 3)

REALWORLDS: JLA **(DC Comics)** Average Joes and Janes dress up as their favorite crimefighters, with disastrous results. **$5.95** (May 10)

SILVER AGE BOOKS **(DC Comics)** It's Retro Month at DC, where the heroes go up against nasty, world-domination nut Agamemno. In *Silver Age* #1 (May 3), Aga flip-flops the minds of villains and heroes. *Silver Age Secret Files* #1 (May 3) is host to several stories, and reveals how Agamemno planned his attack. Then pick up *SA: Challengers of the Unknown* #1, *SA: Justice League of America* #1, *SA: Teen Titans* #1 (all May 10), *SA: Doom Patrol* #1, *SA: The Flash* #1, *SA: Dial "H" for Hero* #1 (all May 17), *SA: The Brave and the Bold* #1 , *SA: Green Lantern* #1, *SA: Showcase* #1 (all May 24), and *Silver Age 80-Page Giant* #1 (May 31). Say, you didn't need to eat this month, did you? Good. **$4.95**–*Secret Files*; **$3.95**–*Silver Age*; **$5.95**–*80-Page Giant*; **$2.50**–*Rest of 'em*

SPIDER-GIRL PRESENTS: THE BUZZ #1 (OF 3) **(Marvel)** MC2 hero The Buzz gets his solo shot. **$2.99** (May 24)

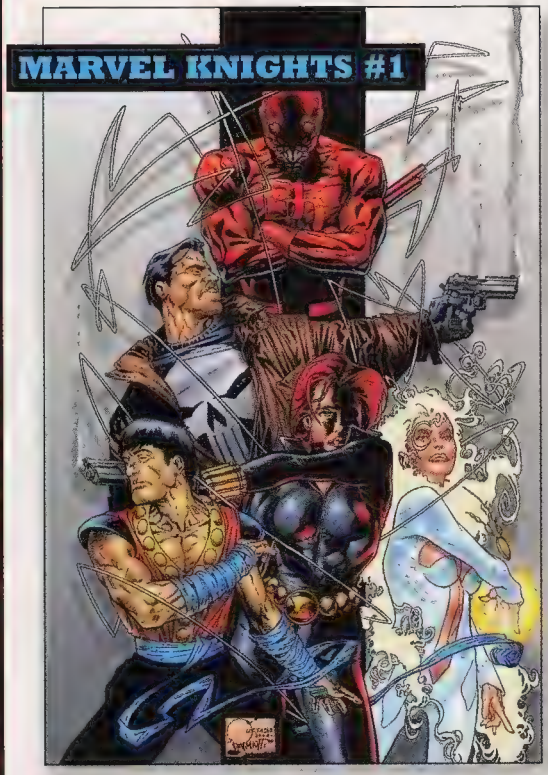
SUPERMAN & BUGS BUNNY #1 (OF 4) **(DC Comics)** Pray for an Elmer Fudd/Lobo match-up to follow. **$2.50** (May 31)

SUPERMAN VS. PREDATOR #1 (OF 3) **(DC Comics)** A virus on Ugly's homeworld weakens the Man of Steel, evening up the odds. **$4.95** (May 24)

TITAN A.E. #1 (OF 3) **(Dark Horse)** A prequel to the animated film, as mankind first comes into contact with murderous aliens. **$2.95** (May 3)

JLA #43

DC COMICS Mark Waid debuts as writer this ish, and immediately makes horrible, horrible trouble for the team. Ra's Al Ghul is in town, and in the aftermath of Mageddon, they're not going to be in the mood to play host. By Mark Waid, Howard Porter and Drew Geraci. **$1.99** (May 24)



JSA #12

DC COMICS It's a rough 'n' tumble kinda day for the JSAers, no doubt. "Sand is nothing but dust," explains co-writer Geoff Johns, "while Atom Smasher goes on a murderous rampage determined to stomp out Kobra. It's gonna be a cool issue!" C'mon, Bashful: Every issue is cool. By Johns, David S. Goyer and Buzz. **$2.50** (May 17)

LEGION LOST #3 (OF 12)

DC COMICS Being lost in space sucks, even when you've got a smart robot and a sexually ambiguous doctor in tow. When you don't, things can really get boring. In this issue, the Legion shack up with new friend Shikari while the Progeny close in. By Dan Abnett, Andy Lanning and Olivier Coipel. **$2.50** (May 10)

MARVEL KNIGHTS #1

MARVEL What do you get when you try and form a team with a bunch of loner heroes? Lots of mumbling. All of Marvel's grim avengers assemble: Daredevil, Punisher, Shang Chi (all right!) Black Widow, and Dagger. By Chuck Dixon, Eduardo Barreto and Klaus Janson. **$2.99** (May 31)

NIGHTWING #45

DC COMICS "The Hunt for Oracle" crossover with *Birds of Prey* begins! Blockbuster is sending forth his minions to beat Oracle's location out of Nightwing. Well, maybe he'll just beat the location of the nearest KFC out of *them*. By Chuck Dixon, Greg Land and José Marzan Jr. **$1.99** (May 24)

100 BULLETS #12

VERTIGO/DC Ah, Paris. The sights, the sounds, the croissants. Agent Graves is probably enjoying his time there, until his nemesis Mr. Shepherd sends a curiously familiar operative to the City of Lights. By Brian Azzarello and Eduardo Risso. **MR. $2.50** (May 3)

ROBIN #78

DC COMICS Boarding school sucks. The homework, the curfew, the demons. Demons! You betcha. Horned Nuisance Arrakhat has his sights set on Tim's roommate Rahfi, and only

STEPPIN' INTO TOMORROW

greatexpectations

THE BEST IS YET TO COME

Sure, there are plenty of great comics out there right now, but here's a list of the comic projects we're most looking forward to in 2000 and beyond:

BATMAN BY FRANK MILLER No papers have been signed, but the long-rumored Frank Miller Batman project (possibly a *Dark Knight 2*!) is closer than ever to happening!

DAREDEVIL #19 Fresh from his solid Batman stints on "No Man's Land," Bob Gale works his magic on ol' Hornhead, with this multi-parter tentatively slated for December.

DARK VICTORY #13 Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale's awesome Batman mystery comes to a close, as the Hangman killer is finally revealed this fall!

BUSIEK AND PÉREZ's GORILLA BOOK No, nothing's been announced, but the awesome *Avengers* team of Kurt Busiek and George Pérez just *gotta* join forces on a creator-owned project for Gorilla. They just gotta!

JOE'S COMICS J. Michael Straczynski (*Rising Stars*) now has an entire new universe to run over at Top Cow, starting with August's *Midnight Nation*.

MARVEL BOY #1 The Marvel Universe + Mr. Crazy Story Guy Grant Morrison + hot artist J.G. Jones = you better believe we're gonna check this out in June!

PREACHER #66 August sees the end of Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon's hysterically sick and twisted tale of Jesse Custer's literal search for God. Expect a LOT of blood.

SENTRY So the Fantastic Four *weren't* Stan Lee's first Marvel Universe creation? Well, if Sentry's even half as cool as the rest o' Stan's creations from the '60s, July's gonna be a hot month, True Believers!

SPAWN #100 Happy Birthday, Spawny guy! Watch for Angela and some guy named McFarlane to crash the party this fall.

UNIVERSE X *Earth X* turned the Marvel Universe into the most desolate and depressing place...and we loved it. Alex Ross and Jim Krueger reach for the stars in July's much-anticipated sequel.

INTRIGUED? THEN MAKE SURE TO CHECK OUT OUR MEGA SUMMER PREVIEW COVERAGE NEXT ISSUE!

THE GREATEST quotes

"...YES, FATHER. I SHALL BECOME A BAT."
–A DYING BRUCE WAYNE, PLEADING WITH HIS FATHER'S SPIRIT TO SHOW HIM HOW TO SCARE CRIMINALS, WHEN A BAT FLIES THROUGH HIS STUDY WINDOW, BATMAN *#404*

Robin can save his bacon. By Chuck Dixon, Pete Woods and Jesse Delperdang. **$1.99** (May 24)

PREACHER #63

VERTIGO/DC The series finale "Alamo" continues. Jesse works toward setting things up for one big, final showdown with the Man upstairs, while Starr realizes he may not be as in control of the Grail as he once thought. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **MR. $2.50** (May 3)

PUNISHER #4 (OF 12)

MARVEL Guns. Bullets. Knives. Grenades. Missiles. But enough about the Punisher's sex toys—you read this comic for the killin'! That's what you'll get this ish, as Punny's war against the Gnucci family continues. By Garth Ennis, Steve Dillon and Jimmy Palmiotti. **MR. $2.99** (May 17)

RISING STARS #8

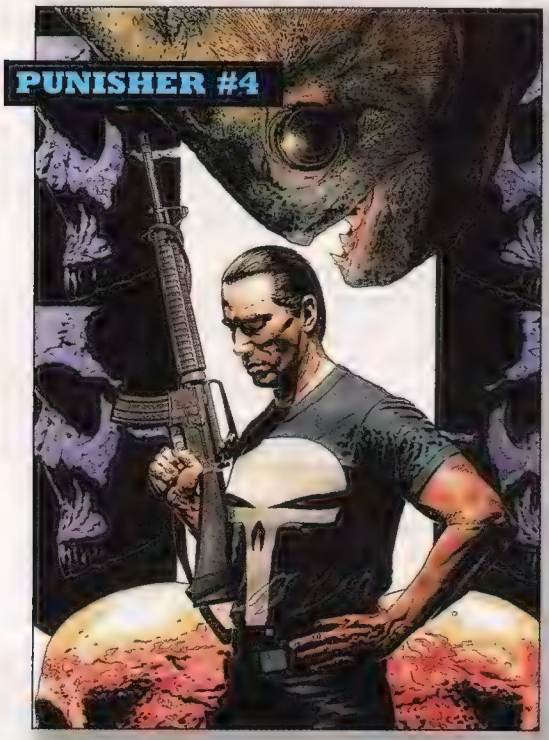
TOP COW/IMAGE Why can't the Specials just get along? Because all the little different groups are self-serving and interested only in working toward their own private goals. Say—sounds just like humans. Oooh. Reflective literature. By J. Michael Straczynski, Christian Zanier and Livesay. **$2.50** (late May)

SPIDER-GIRL #22

MARVEL Darkdevil is in town, and Spider-Girl still hasn't figured out whether or not to trust the Buzz yet. Wonder where his powers come from. Jolt Cola? Smack? All this, and a new villain called Funny Face. By Tom DeFalco, Pat Olliffe and Al Williamson. **$2.25** (May 17)

SPYBOY #8

DARK HORSE You go to a place with a name like Makaresha, you can expect a little intrigue. Spyboy and Bombshell are hot on the trail of a plot to destroy the United Nations. And a pal of


PUNISHER #4

alsoshipping

MORE BOOKS TO GET

ATOMICS #5 **(AAA Pop Comics)** The Light makes his debut. **MR. $2.95** (shipping late May)

BATMAN BOOKS **(DC Comics)** In *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* #131 (May 3), Green Arrow wishes Bats was around to break him out of the pokey. In *Batman: Gotham Knights* #5 (May 17), the villainous Key attempts to force Batman to break his no-killing rule. And in *Batman* #579 (May 24), Orca makes her presence known when a treasured diamond becomes a target for theft. **$1.99**–*Legends, Batman*; **$2.50**–*Knights*

FLASH #162 **(DC Comics)** Felix Faust returns to cause trouble for Flash and company. **$1.99** (May 31)

GREEN LANTERN #126 **(DC Comics)** Kyle goes undercover in a prison to learn the whereabouts of the late Undertow's wife. **$1.99** (May 3)

GRENDEL: DEVIL'S LEGACY #3 (OF 12) **(Maverick/Dark Horse)** Christine Spar takes measures of revenge on her son's kidnapper. **$2.95** (May 24)

HITMAN #51 **(DC Comics)** Asylum escapees from Section Eight. **$2.50** (May 31)

INCREDIBLE HULK #16 **(Marvel)** The Hulk hides out from Ryker at Doc Samson's place. Call the plumber! **$2.25** (May 24)

STEAMPUNK #4

KIN #4 **(Top Cow/Image)** Elspeth's knowledge about the lost caveman could be her undoing. **$2.95** (late May)

PROMETHEA #8 **(WildStorm/DC)** Sophie Bangs tests her new skills against the Goetic demons. **$2.95** (May 24)

SAM AND TWITCH #10 **(Image)** Modern-day witches are being offed. **$2.50** (late May)

SHOCKROCKETS #2 (OF 6) **(Gorilla/Image)** Does rookie Alejandro have what it takes to stick with the high-flyin' defense team? **$2.50** (late May)

SPAWN #98 **(Todd McFarlane/Image)** Another rebellion in Heaven is threatened. **$2.50** (late May)

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS **(Marvel)** *Amazing Spider-Man* #19 (May 17) features the return of Erik Larsen to Spidey-ville, as Venom spots puny Parker in his old black suit and goes apespit. In *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* #19 (May 24), the investigation into Mary Jane's death continues. **$2.25** each

STARS AND S.T.R.I.P.E. #12 **(DC Comics)** The Star-Spangled Kid and other townsfolk fall prey to the Dragon King. **$2.50** (May 17)

STEAMPUNK #4 **(WildStorm/DC)** Cole faces the fact that the world he lives in may be of his own creation. Cripes! **$2.50** (May 24)

SUPERMAN BOOKS **(DC Comics)** "Critical Condition" continues in *Adventures of Superman* #580 (May 10), as the Atom and friends swim around inside Superman's internal organs. Blech. In *Superman: The Man of Steel* #102 (May 17), a traitor is revealed...inside Superman! And in *Action Comics* #767 (May 24), Superman tussles with Deathstroke while his tiny saviors take a wrong turn and wind up stuck in his big toe. **$1.99 each**

SUPERMAN/GEN13 #2 (OF 3) **(DC Comics)** Fairchild believes she's Supergirl. **$2.50** (May 3)

WITCHBLADE #40 **(Top Cow/Image)** Keu Cha boards the Witchblade wagon! **$2.50** (late May)

Spy's named Butch has a secret. Giggle. By Peter David and Carlos Meglia. **$2.95** (May 17)

STRANGERS IN PARADISE VOLUME III #32

ABSTRACT STUDIO What if someone was in charge of the Internet...and she was a chick? Less nudie sites, no doubt. Katchoo is organizing a takeover of the 'Net, but that could change by the time David finds her. By Terry Moore. **$2.75** (late May)

SUPERMAN #158

DC COMICS It seems that Superman has fallen under the weather, and the Atom has the brilliant idea of shrinking himself, Superboy, Supergirl and Steel so they can enter his body and sort things out. A little rash, but that would've been our vote. By Jeph Loeb, Duncan Rouleau and Jaime Mendoza. **$1.99** (May 3)

THOR #25

MARVEL You don't see Thor seizing illegal cable boxes, do ya? No, sir. When he fights evil, he does it on the cosmic level. Thanos has all the toys he needs to conquer the world, so Thor suits up in Odin's enchanted armor (baby powder optional) and sets out to knock him silly. By Dan Jurgens, John Romita Jr. and Dick Giordano. **$3.99**—nice, deluxe, shiny cover; **$2.99**—plain, less-snazzy cover

THUNDERBOLTS #40

MARVEL "The incredible revelation of who is Citizen V, the incredible shock of seeing Scourge kill Zemo...How do we top it?" Is Fabian Nicieza asking us? We dunno. It's probably rhetorical. "In order to rescue one of their own teammates, the Thunderbolts are forced to use the services of a known and very deadly villain. And Scourge gets one step closer to another member of the T-Bolts." See? Rhetorical. By Nicieza, Mark Bagley and Scott Hanna. **$2.25** (May 24)

ontheedge

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

IT'S RAINING MONKEYS!!

Hoo, boy. Have we got a treat for you: *Saga of the Metabarons* #6 (of 16) by Humanoids Publishing. Let's start a checklist: You gotchyer stranded warriors, a father-son team. Check. Got 'em on a planet populated by gorillas that float. Check. How about some flat-bodied horrors that gobble up said gorillas if one of them happens to drop? Check. And the ancient tradition of offing your old man? Check-a-roo. **$2.95** (shipping late May)

TOM STRONG #8

WILDSTORM/DC With a name like Tom Strong, you learn to get tough real quick. But can Tom's mah-cheese-mo hold him over while he's in the Old West? Giddy up. By Alan Moore, Chris Sprouse, Alan Weiss and Al Gordon. **$2.95** (May 17)

TOP 10 #9

WILDSTORM/DC King Peacock has a mission: to get to Grand Central. Why? Ain't telling, 'cuz that's what three bucks buys you. Detective Corbeau, meanwhile, comes closer to solving the mystery behind the Gomolko/Graczik deaths from the first issue. By Alan Moore, Gene Ha and Zander Cannon. **$2.95** (May 10)

TRANSMETROPOLITAN #34

VERTIGO/DC Spider is pretty far gone. He's upping his attack on Smiler and the Party in Government, and there are forces conspiring to shut him down. By Warren Ellis, Darick Robertson and Rodney Ramos. **MR. $2.50** (May 17)

USAGI YOJIMBO #38

MAVERICK/DARK HORSE Yessir, a Samurai rabbit every month, and you don't have to smoke anything to see it! Of this issue, creator Stan Sakai notes, "Usagi returns to the temple where the sword of the Grasscutter is located. The temple had offered sanctuary to a merchant and bandits are outside, storming the temple." Bandits: Have they no other way to vent? By Sakai. **$2.95** (May 24)

X-MEN BOOKS

MARVEL Dive into *Uncanny X-Men* #382 (May 10), which continues the introduction of the new team. "They're in Venice, and they've been attacked by a mysterious team

THE GREATEST quotes

"I HAVE AN ORGASM EVERY FIVE MINUTES. PLEASE DO NOT TELL MY FATHER."
–*FUJI, EXPLAINING ANOTHER OF HIS UNIQUE QUALITIES TO HIS TEAMMATES IN STORMWATCH,* STORMWATCH *(VOL. 2) #2*

called the Shockwave Riders," explains writer Chris Claremont. "And Phoenix has gone into a trap." D'oh! By Claremont, Tom Raney and Tim Townsend. Over in *X-Men* #102 (May 24), the Neo continue to pound on the group, even with Wolverine around to snarl and drool. By Claremont, Leinil Francis Yu and Mark Morales. **$2.25 each**

X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM #4 (OF 6)

MARVEL Bobby Drake! Jean Grey! Scott Summers! What do they all have in common (besides being a bunch of filthy muties)? They're all realizing that Professor Xavier is a pretty keen guy, and that his school has got it going on. By Joe Casey and former X-great Paul Smith. **$2.99** (May 17)

characterprofile

RAP SHEET

LARA CROFT

HEADS UP How'd Lara gain her archaeological expertise? She trained under the renowned Professor Werner Von Croy, who tragically died. (*Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation*)

TONGUE-TIED Besides her sexy British accent, Lara's also a master linguist who speaks many languages, including Farsi, the language of Iran. (*Tomb Raider* #1)

WITCHY WOMAN Lara's had to team with Sara Pezzini–Witchblade–on more than one excursion into the supernatural while tracking down ancient artifacts. Now the two are buds. (*Tomb Raider/Witchblade* #1)

HEARTBREAK Lara was engaged once, but lost her fiancé in a plane crash that somehow spared her life. (*Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation*)

BREATHE DEEP Lara's got a huge...uh, lung capacity. She's had to hold her breath–while fending off assassins, no less–several hundred feet underwater. (*Tomb Raider* #2)

RACK 'EM UP 34D-24-35. 'Nuff said.

WRITE STUFF How does Lara pay her rent? Well, besides coming from money, she also writes about her fantastic archaeological exploits. (*Tomb Raider*)

SHARPSHOOTER Lara's an expert marksman, having used an arsenal that includes handguns, rifles, shotguns and Uzis to slaughter both enemies and helpless monkeys. (*Tomb Raider II*)

GLAMOROUS GAMS How does Lara pull off those crazy jumps and swan dives? Years of ballet and gymnastics training, baby!

AGONY OF THE FEET Wanna go rock-climbing with Lara? Of course you do. Besides being a top-notch climber, she's also an expert extreme skier.

LICENSE TO DRIVE Ms. Croft may be used to driving on the left side of the road, but she's an ace behind the wheel, with experience piloting jeeps, snowmobiles and speedboats, among other things. (*Tomb Raider II*)

ORIGIN

Lara Croft was just another spoiled rich kid, confused about how to spend her life–until she met Professor Werner Von Croy at age 16. Von Croy took her under his wing, training her in the ways of archaeology until his untimely death. After recovering from the incident, Lara went on to complete her education at a posh Swiss finishing school. She was a happy socialite until another tragedy–a plane crash that claimed the life of her fiancé, the Earl of Farringdon. It was then that Lara became the Tomb Raider, dedicating her life to the pursuit of ancient relics–often donating them to museums–and earning her keep writing about her exploits. Home base is currently an eye-popping British country estate, complete with an underground vault to store her greatest discoveries.

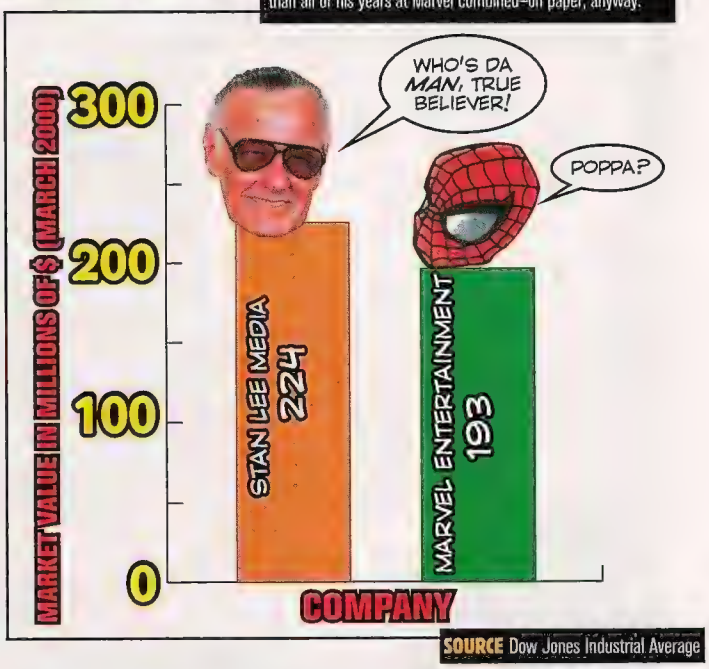
NOW APPEARING

As everyone and their brother knows, the adventures of Lara Croft have branched out beyond the mega-successful video game franchise to a monthly Top Cow comic. *Tomb Raider* writer Dan Jurgens doesn't plan on letting Lara get any rest. "In #7 we'll turn the tables on Lara," explains Jurgens. "Instead of searching for an artifact, this time she wakes up with one–the Jewel of Shaherettin–and quickly learns that a mysterious group called the Midnight Squires are after it." And as if that's not enough, a pair of *Tomb Raider* comic specials are on tap, as well as a brand-spankin' new Dreamcast game. Of course, don't forget the rumored movie, starring Angelina Jolie as Lara. Mmmm...

COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH by Lars Pearson

MARKET WATCH

MAKE MINE...LEE! Hype over the debut of Stan Lee Media has caused the company's stock value to soar past Lee's former haunt, Marvel Entertainment, making Stan the Man more money than all of his years at Marvel combined–on paper, anyway.



SOURCE Dow Jones Industrial Average

MARVELOUS BOOST

Relaunches, creative shake-ups energize House of Ideas

Verily! The God of Thunder commands: Marvel *shall* rule the day!

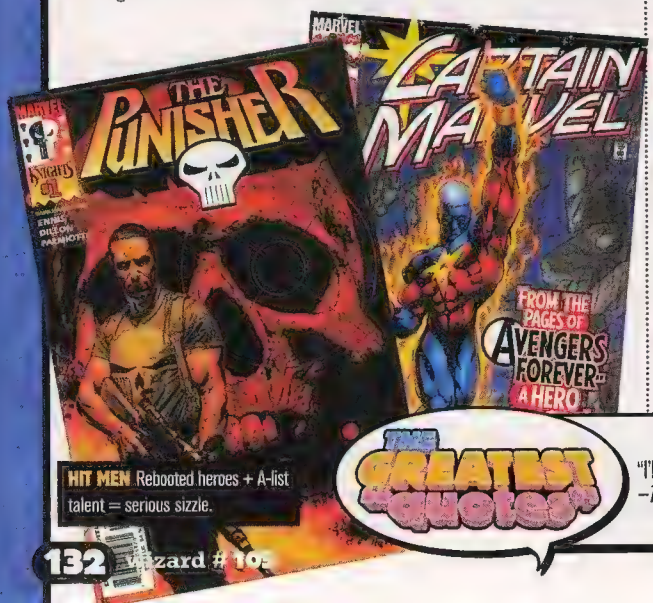
DC holds the biggest market share, but Marvel's comics dominate the charts—everybody knows that. But being on top is not always the same as being hot, and to its credit, Marvel has recently unveiled hit after hit, particularly a new crop of titles that either relaunched from #1 or saw creative turnover. And with Marvel shoring up its fan support, these books could fly higher than the S.H.I.E.L.D. Helicarrier. Let's take 'em one at a time:

• **Punisher (vol. 4)**—For now, he's the big gun, and this hot book from the *Preacher* team of Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon could be pulling up Marvel's entire line. Just as top-rated TV show "ER" shores up NBC's Thursday-night line-up, *Punisher*'s making more people read Marvel books. P.S.—A regular *Punisher* #1 now runs for $5 online, while the Tim Bradstreet variant cover easily nets more than 10 bucks.

• **Captain Marvel (vol. 3)**—A favorite that spun out of *Avengers Forever*, this book won over its fan following largely due to the skilled work of writer Peter David (*Young Justice*, *SpyBoy*). As with *Punisher*, *Captain Marvel* #1 gets $5, while the white-background variant blows that out the door at $10.

• **Thunderbolts #34 and up**—Three years ago, *Thunderbolts* bowled readers over with its premise of Marvel supervillains masquerading as heroes. But then critics alleged the title got tired—until new writer Fabian Nicieza took over from Kurt Busiek and breathed new life into it. Now it's a hot pick, and Nicieza's mystery-woven scripts make readers want all of his issues. Nicieza's debut (*Thunderbolts* #34) is a solid $5—when you can find it.

• **Iron Man (vol. 3) #26 and up**—Forget *Daredevil*. Even as Joe Quesada blows an unbelievable number of deadlines as the (admittedly outstanding) artist for Marvel's Man Without Fear, he's racking up kudos as writer on *Iron Man*, with four issues in your hand by the time you read this. Fans and collectors would seem to agree, draining Quesada's *Iron Man* from the shelves and threatening back-issue price increases.



HIT MEN Rebooted heroes + A-list talent = serious sizzle.

X-MEN: BUY 'EM BY THE DOZEN

The blockbuster mutant Apocalypse isn't the only one gathering The Twelve.

STAN LEE PHOTO COURTESY OF JIM MCHUGH

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"I'D RATHER FACE THE JOKER ALONE AGAIN."
–*TIM DRAKE (ROBIN), ABOUT TO BREAK UP WITH HIS GIRLFRIEND ARIANA*, ROBIN #56

Even as *X-Men* #100 launched a bold new X-era—with the return of writer Chris Claremont and new X-villains called "The Neo"—fans seemed to soak up copies of the previous X-storyarc involving "The Twelve," the group of mutants captured by Apocalypse as part of his life-prolonging machinations.

Be warned: There're already signs of price increases for core "Twelve" issues such as *Uncanny X-Men* #376-#377 and *X-Men* #96-#97. Perhaps more important, watch tie-in issues such as *Cable* #76 (the final pairing of Cable and his daddy Cyclops before Cyke's "death") and *Wolverine* #147, the aftermath of Wolvie recovering his Adamantium claws. For now, a decrease in online trading makes pricing slightly difficult, but points to a diminished supply, and several of these issues are already going for $3 to $4.

Speaking of Claremont, if fans latch

NEO-DEBUT Feels like the very first time–almost.

onto his return at all, expect *X-Men* #100 to merit a premium. Yes, sales on it rose, but likely not enough to counter-balance the launch of Claremont's new era, plus a six-way cover split. You have been warned.

EVE'S GOT SOUL

We know collectors flock to writers and artists. Now they're flocking to...colorists?

Case in point: *E.V.E. Protomecha* and *Soul Saga*, two books from writers Aron Lusen and Christian Lichtner that lacked name recognition but gained followings damn fast.

Mind, it helped that Lusen and Lichtner founded Liquid! Graphics, a coloring house with a fine reputation. And *Soul Saga* certainly benefited from

BURIED TREASURES

THIS MONTH: X-MEN MOVIE TIE-INS

Power to the X! With photos from the "X-Men" film all over the Internet, fans are buzzing about the X-characters in the flick–and talk means heat. You may wanna get yer hands on these related X-books while they're relatively cheap:

◄ MS. MARVEL #18

Sex still sells, and shots of Rebecca Romijn-Stamos painted blue as the shape-shifting Mystique (and yeah, she's mostly naked, kids) should boost interest in the character's first appearance. *Ms. Marvel* #18, currently a hit at $16, could zoom up just on the sex-starved fanboys' say-so.

IRON FIST #14 ►

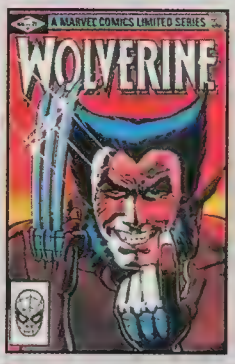
Back when Sabretooth became the dominant Wolverine villain, this book, with Sabe's first appearance, blasted up in price over the three-digit mark. And with a savage movie performance by Tyler Mane, the $100 price could claw its way up even further.

◄ AVENGERS ANNUAL #10

In this ish, the Avengers fought the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants–including their newest member, Rogue! Yep, everyone's favorite southern belle was a baddie in her first appearance, but with only a few more appearances she was on the side of the angels as a member of the X-Men. A steal at 20 bucks.

UNCANNY X-MEN #212 ►

Throwin' the smackdown! This ish saw Wolverine and archnemesis Sabretooth square off for the first time. And this scrap was only a prelude to the next issue's more brutal Round 2. Movie fans who love the Wolvie-Sabretooth action scenes should return here to see where it all began–for only $8 to $10. For now, that is.



◄ WOLVERINE (MINI-SERIES) #1

In many ways, this is the epitome of a Wolverine book. Written by Chris Claremont and drawn by Frank Miller, this ish gave Wolvie his first-ever solo title. In recent years, it's slumped in price, but that means it's the perfect time to buy it cheap and make coin. Go to it, bub. ■ LP

MORT OF THE MONTH

ONE LAME-ASS CHARACTER

THE WORD

FIRST APPEARANCE: *DCU Heroes Secret Files* #1

DEFINING MOMENT: *DCU Villains Secret Files* #1. After breaking into a federal building, the Word downloads info on, of all villains, Mr. Mind, that lame talking worm who fights Captain Marvel. We woulda gone straight for the porn.

THE DOPE: A living word processor, the Word has the ability to erase words, from any paper or computer screen. He can erase computer files just by pressing his hand to the monitor. Maybe if this dumb power had been invented before the Internet controlled everything from the weather to David Caruso's acting career, we would have believed it. The Word never talks, choosing instead to express himself by displaying text all over his body. Kinky.

MORTOMETER

the sword-and-sorcery void left by *Battle Chasers*. When *Soul Saga* proved a surprise sellout, *E.V.E.* followed hot on its heels with orders only half of *Soul Saga*'s, plus interesting techno-manga art. *E.V.E.* was a nationwide sellout in 48 hours, and #1 issues of either title dent you in the $5-$10 range today.

And yeah, just so you know, both books had cover splits. To wit:

E.V.E. Protomecha—Issue #1 saw a regular cover by series artist Ale Garza, plus variant covers by Joe Madureira (*Battle Chasers*), David Finch (*Ascension*) and a Garza-drawn Another Universe cover.

Soul Saga—Issue #1 had a regular cover by series artist Stephen Platt and variant covers by Madureira and Michael Turner (*Fathom*), plus a *Soul Saga* #1 Another Universe variant by Platt again.

But watch out: The Liquid! books' long-term success could depend on shipping on time. And that might be a problem: Orders for *Soul Saga* #3 have already been canceled with a re-solicitation coming, suggesting trouble in paradise. Still, fan demand can overcome most obstacles, putting these books in a good position.

BATGIRL FRENZY

If actions speak louder than words, the mute Batgirl's sales power blasts with the volume of the Gotham City Orchestra.

Rolling out of the critical success of the "No Man's Land" storyarc in which the new Batgirl debuted, the *Batgirl* regular series drove home a sleeper hit for DC, with issue #1 easily going for $5. Fans give big credit to this book's writing by Kelley Puckett and Scott Peterson—especially impressive since Batgirl hardly speaks.

Now, don't rev up your Bat-engines too fast. True, this title's showing heat—so much, that its sales trump perennial Batsellers such as *Nightwing*. However, a second print of *Batgirl* #1 and the almost inevitable *Batgirl* trade paperback (just watch, DC will do one—you just *know* that they will) could partly squelch this book's heat. But so far, it's a hell of a ride—for a hell of a book.

Wizard Price Guide Manager Lars Pearson used to walk 10 miles each way to school as a little boy. In the snow. Uphill. Both ways.

RETAILER NETWORK & V.I.P.s

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"no more than a half grade between us"

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"Action #1 has found a new home"

"As I expected, my books were accurately graded by CGC. But I was surprised at the quality presentation of their holder. It's light-weight but gives superb protection. I can see a book from all angles and the colors are clear. My Action #1 has found a new home in a CGC holder, and more of my collection will soon follow."

Daniel Kramer

"never buy a key book without CGC"

"I appreciate the work you guys are doing at CGC. I've been very satisfied with the grading. Certain books you graded 9.4 I was hoping for a 9.6 but I cannot argue the validity of your grade. What CGC is doing for the hobby is fantastic. Your grading and restoration check has removed the uncertainty and fear many new buyers experience. I believe many people who are outside of the hobby will begin to purchase books and I just wish you had been here when I first started buying the expensive key issues. I will never buy a key book without CGC certification. Keep up the good work."

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"the future of comic book collecting"

"I am writing to tell you how pleased I am with your grading and service. I am confident that CGC certification will bring a renaissance in the hobby. From this first batch, I can tell you the grading is accurate and the holder is an excellent product. There is no doubt that CGC is the future of comic book collecting."

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Best Comics & Hobby Center

"spared another horror story"

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HOT 10 comics

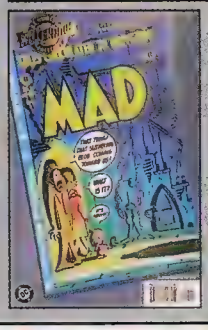
***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. These are the books ringing the registers this month...**

1 PUNISHER #1

WRITER: Garth Ennis
ARTISTS: S. Dillon and J. Palmiotti

Talk about a turnaround. Thanks to the killer work of Ennis, Dillon and Palmiotti on issue #1, the Punisher's gone from the outhouse to the penthouse. With a back-to-basics approach (and some wicked variant covers), this book's sold over 115,000 copies to date. With as much momentum as this baby's got, it'd probably take an elephant gun to bring it down. Which is how Punny normally brings down a jaywalker. You'll probably see that in issue #4. **LAST MONTH: 1**

2 MAD MILLENNIUM EDITION #1



WRITER: Harvey Kurtzman
ARTISTS: Too many guys to list

DC forgot to give credit where credit is due. Much like the deal with Bob Kane, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster (who are credited on every Batman and Superman story), William Gaines is due his credit on every issue of *MAD*. But when this *Millennium Edition* first came out, Gaines' moniker was nowhere to be found. So DC shredded the first run and did a reprint. But a couple o' issues made it out alive, and now they're going for about $25 a pop! **LAST MONTH: NOT RATED (N.R.)**

3 E.V.E. PROTOMECHA #1

WRITERS: A. Lusen and C. Lichtner
ARTISTS: Ale Garza and Kaleb Salstrom

We're not up on our Bible readin', but we don't remember Adam's babe lookin' like this! Anyway, this lovely tome from the Liquid! Graphics guys came outta nowhere to shoot up the charts. Looks like years of coloring taught the Liquid! guys how to make good comics. Now if only they can do something about outrageous gas prices... **LAST MONTH: 2**

4 BATGIRL #1

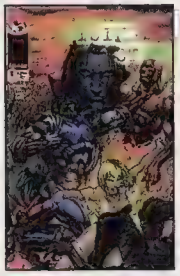
WRITERS: K. Puckett and S. Peterson
ARTISTS: D. Scott and R. Campanella

Still hot in the wake of "NML," Batgirl gives new meaning to the phrase, "Walk softly and carry a big stick." Climbing three spots from a month ago, she's clubbing the competition (and Gotham's baddies) without making a peep ('cuz she doesn't talk all that much). Plus, it sure doesn't hurt that she's cute as a button. **LAST MONTH: 7**

5 SOUL SAGA #1

WRITERS: Stephen Platt and C. Lichtner
ARTISTS: Stephen Platt and Batt

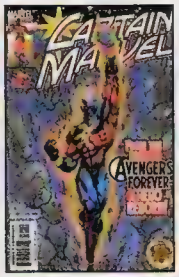
Platt and Batt draw a phat book! That's phat as in cool! See, we know all about the street lingo. And hey, there's that Liquid! guy doing some writing again. Anyone else ever wonder about that odd exclamation point? That's just a clear case of overabundant enthusiasm. No one's *really* that perky. **LAST MONTH: 6**



6 RISING STARS #1

WRITER: J. Michael Straczynski
ARTISTS: Keu Cha and Jason Gorder

There's no escaping the gravitational pull of this star. Six issues into the series, and #1 still sits on the "Hot 10." J. Michael Straczynski weaves a powerful tale, and Keu Cha lays down some tasty pencils fans can't stay away from. And Jason Gorder? He's just one bad mofo! You don't wanna meet him in a dark alley. **LAST MONTH: 3**



7 CAPTAIN MARVEL #1

WRITER: Peter David
ARTISTS: Chriscross and Anibal Rodriguez

Peter David's a funny guy and this book's got readers rolling in the aisles. But David's also a genius. Know why? He took Rick Jones, the lamest character this side of Snapper Carr, and made him cool again! Come to think of it, that's more like magic. Maybe David's a magician too... **LAST MONTH: 4**

8 LEGION LOST #1

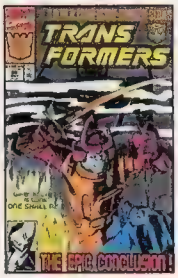
WRITERS: Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning
ARTISTS: Olivier Copiel and Andy Lanning

Break out the Flight Rings and meet us at the clubhouse; the Legion's back in the spotlight where it belongs! Abnett and Lanning are telling awesome, cosmic stories that have fans drooling over DC's first teen supergroup. The only way to get a copy of this book? Hop in a time bubble and pray. **LAST MONTH: NR**

9 THUNDERBOLTS #34

WRITER: Fabian Nicieza
ARTISTS: Mark Bagley and Scott Hanna

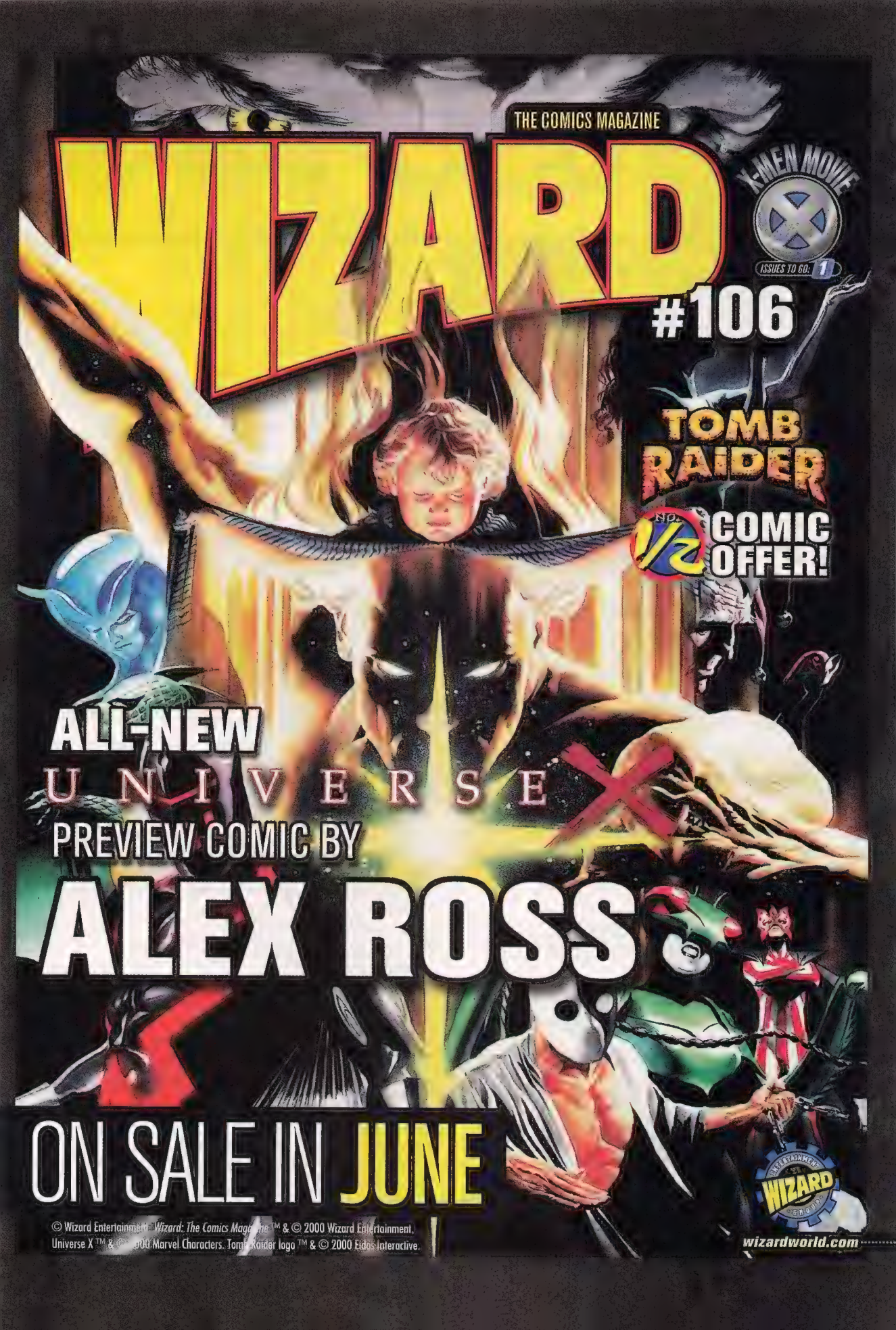
Fans loved the T-Bolts when Kurt Busiek was writin' 'em. And now that Fabian's onboard, they love it just as much. Starting with this, his first issue, Fabian's had the Hulk thoroughly demolish the Bolts, killed off teen member Jolt and changed Mach-1's skin color! Someone tell Fabian the T-Bolts are really good guys now... **LAST MONTH: NR**



10 TRANSFORMERS #80

WRITER: Simon Furman
ARTISTS: A. Wildman and S. Baskerville

Transformers? On *this* list? Well, this here's the last issue of the regular robots-in-disguise series, and so was dramatically underordered. And with Transformers and G.I. Joe nostalgia on the rise, the kids who loved it then are throwing their paychecks away now to get all the toys, comics and videos. Bet Optimus Prime's all shiny with pride. **LAST MONTH: NR**


THE COMICS MAGAZINE
WIZARD
#106
X-MEN MOVIE
ISSUES TO GO: 1
TOMB RAIDER
NO. 1/2 COMIC OFFER!
ALL-NEW
UNIVERSE X
PREVIEW COMIC BY
ALEX ROSS
ON SALE IN JUNE
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WIZARD
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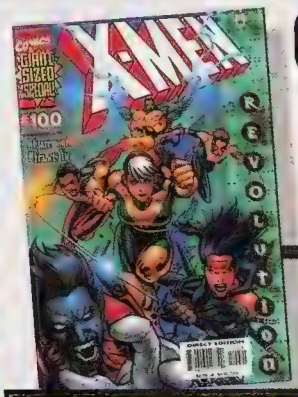
THE HIGHEST-ORDERED BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF **MARCH**

TOP 100

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff using data supplied by Diamond Comic Distributors



In Chris Claremont's return issue, the team battles the Neo in outer space in *X-Men* #100.

1. X-Men #100 (Marvel)
2. Uncanny X-Men #380 (Marvel)
3. Wolverine #150 (Marvel)
4. JLA #41 (DC)
5. Magdalena #1 (Top Cow/Image)
6. Avengers #28 (Marvel)
7. Spawn #96 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
8. Punisher #2 (Marvel)
9. Fantastic Four #29 (Marvel)
10. Tomb Raider #4 (Top Cow/Image)
11. Cable #79 (Marvel)
12. X-Force #102 (Marvel)
13. Amazing Spider-Man #17 (Marvel)
14. Thor #23 (Marvel)
15. Generation X #63 (Marvel)
16. Gear Station #1 (Image)
17. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #17 (Marvel)
18. Batman #577 (DC)
19. Iron Man #28 (Marvel)
20. Batman: Dark Victory #6 (DC)
21. Batgirl #2 (DC)
22. Captain America #29 (Marvel)
23. Detective Comics #744 (DC)
24. X-Man #63 (Marvel)
25. Mutant X #19 (Marvel)
26. Rising Stars #6 (Top Cow/Image)
27. Gambit #16 (Marvel)
28. JSA #10 (DC)
29. Batman: Gotham Knights #3 (DC)
30. Superman #156 (DC)
31. Nightwing #43 (DC)
32. Witchblade #39 (Top Cow/Image)
33. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #129 (DC)
34. Action Comics #765 (DC)
35. Astro City #22 (WildStorm/DC)
36. Green Lantern #124 (DC)
37. Superman: The Man of Steel #100 (Coll. Ed.) (DC)
38. Preacher #61 (Vertigo/DC)
39. Amazing Spider-Man 2000 (Marvel)
40. Flash #160 (DC)
41. Darkness #30 (Top Cow/Image)
42. Crimson #17 (WildStorm/DC)
43. Steampunk #2 (WildStorm/DC)
44. Incredible Hulk #14 (Marvel)
45. X-Men: The Hidden Years #6 (Marvel)
46. Adventures of Superman #578 (DC)
47. Thunderbolts #38 (Marvel)
48. Avengers Two: Wonder Man & Beast #1 (Marvel)
49. Warlands #8 (Image)
50. Young Justice: Sins of Youth #1 (DC)
51. Titans #15 (DC)
52. Tom Strong #8 (WildStorm/DC)
53. Young Justice: Sins of Youth #2 (DC)
54. Wildcats #9 (WildStorm/DC)
55. Spider-Girl #20 (Marvel)
56. Sins of Youth: JLA Jr. #1 (DC)
57. Robin #76 (DC)
58. Planetary #10 (WildStorm/DC)
59. Top 10 #8 (WildStorm/DC)
60. Authority #13 (WildStorm/DC)
61. Sins of Youth: Batboy and Robin #1 (DC)
62. Thunderbolts 2000 (Marvel)
63. Catwoman #80 (DC)
64. Captain Marvel #5 (Marvel)
65. Spawn: The Undead #10 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
66. Bishop: The Last X-Man #8 (Marvel)
67. Darkminds #2 (Image)
68. Spawn: The Dark Ages #13 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
69. Extreme Forces #1 (Image)
70. Eve Protomecha #2 (Image)
71. Promethea #8 (WildStorm/DC)
72. Sins of Youth: Superman Jr./Superboy Sr. #1 (DC)
73. Deadpool #40 (Marvel)
74. Batman: The Hill (DC)
75. Star Wars #16 (Dark Horse)
76. Sins of Youth: Kid Flash/Impulse #1 (DC)
77. Gen^{13} #51 (WildStorm/DC)
78. Sins of Youth: Starwoman & JSA #1 (DC)
79. Star Wars: Chewbacca #3 (Dark Horse)
80. Buffy the Vampire Slayer #19 (Dark Horse)
81. Marvel: The Lost Generation #10 (Marvel)
82. Superman vs. The Terminator: Death to the Future #4 (D.H.)
83. Sins of Youth: Wonder Girls #1 (DC)
84. Titans/Legion of Super-Heroes: Universe Ablaze #3 (DC)
85. Spider-Woman #11 (Marvel)
86. Swamp Thing #1 (Vertigo/DC)
87. Gatecrasher #3 (Black Bull Entertainment)
88. Supergirl #44 (DC)
89. Starman #65 (DC)
90. Black Panther #18 (Marvel)
91. Superboy #74 (DC)
92. Star Wars Tales #3 (Dark Horse)
93. Sins of Youth: The Secret/Deadboy #1 (DC)
94. Gen Active #1 (WildStorm/DC)
95. Sam and Twitch #8 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
96. Sins of Youth: Aquaboy/Lagoon Man #1 (DC)
97. Birds of Prey #17 (DC)
98. Batman: Haunted Gotham #4 (DC)
99. Azrael: Agent of the Bat #64 (DC)
100. Wonder Woman #156 (DC)

THE GREATEST QUOTES

"THINK CLEAN THOUGHTS, CHUM."
–BATMAN TO ROBIN AS JASON TODD MEETS THE SCANTILY CLAD WONDER WOMAN FOR THE FIRST TIME, SUPERMAN ANNUAL *#11*

TOP 100 HIGHLIGHTS

HE'S BACK!!!

X-Men #100 (No. 1)
Folks, it's an X-Men world, and we're merely living in it. You wouldn't know just from looking, but the return of writer Chris Claremont to the top-selling *X-Men*, a title he left nine years ago, shot sales of *X-Men* up 38 percent. Mind, a six-way cover split featuring art by previous X-artists such as John Byrne and Art Adams definitely helped. P.S.–Between this and the beginning of Warren Ellis' "Counter-X" books (see below), other X-titles such as *Wolverine* #150 and *Cable* #79 rode the X-shaped coattails and rose 21 and 18 percent respectively.

Magdalena #1 (No. 5)
This one caught us by surprise. After all, Magdalena, a *Darkness* spin-off character, is virtually unknown. And writer Marcia Chen (*Ascension*) and artist Joe Benitez (*Darkness*) have hardly been commercial draws up to now. Still, Magdalena, a sword-bearing agent of the Catholic Church, already has her own fan following and looks to be a key player from Top Cow.

Punisher #2 (No. 8)
Not only did *Punisher* #2 barely lose ground, but if you factor in advance reorders, this book actually outsold *Punisher* #1. That's almost unheard of–and a true vote of confidence for creators Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon, the boys of *Preacher* fame.

X-Force #102, Generation X #63, X-Man #63 (Nos. 12, 15, 24)
Fans could have given the big yawn to creator Warren Ellis (*Transmetropolitan*, *Planetary*) joining these lower-tier X-books, but readers turned out the vote and shot sales up by a whopping third on each. And yeah, variant covers on each made a difference, but from early reviews on the Internet, the story's the thing readers are really admiring.

Gear Station #1 (No. 16)
He's been an artist for years, but Dan Fraga's still relatively unknown. Good thing his new property blasted to an impressive No. 16 debut with the help of "minor players" (note dripping sarcasm here) Alex Ross (*Earth X*), Michael Turner (*Fathom*) and Pat Lee (*Warlands*), who drew variant covers. Still, *Gear Station*, with its unbelievable computer-generated art, has the potential to stay as high as its floating city in the sky.

Sins of Youth Books (Nos. 50, 53, 56, 61, 72, 76, 83, 93, 96)
Younger readers seemed to think this Young Justice crossover ruled, but many older, more analytical readers scoffed and passed it by. Thus, "Sins of Youth" ranked significantly lower than the usual DC fifth-week event, although it did pull up some lower-tier books (*Superboy* #74 shot up 24 percent in sales–a nice gain for the pubescent Boy of Steel).

CLOSE-UP LOOK

Break it on down now! Here's a look at the top-selling books in a couple categories, with their overall Diamond Comics Distributors "Top 300" rankings in parentheses.

MY FAIR LADY Magdalena, the latest creation from Top Cow, trumped her sisters to get the No. 1 spot for chick-starring books.

TOP 10 BOOKS W/ FEMALE LEADS

1. Magdalena #1 (Image, No. 5)
2. Tomb Raider #4 (Top Cow/Image, No. 10)
3. Batgirl #2 (DC, No. 21)
4. Witchblade #39 (Top Cow/Image, No. 32)
5. Spider-Girl #20 (Marvel, No. 55)
6. Catwoman #80 (DC, No. 63)
7. E.V.E. Protomecha #2 (Image, No. 70)
8. Promethea #8 (WildStorm/DC, No. 71)
9. Sins of Youth: Starwoman & JSA (DC, No. 78)
10. Buffy the Vampire Slayer #19 (Dark Horse, No. 80)

TOP 10 MINI-SERIES

1. Punisher #2 (Marvel, No. 8)
2. Batman: Dark Victory #6 (DC, No. 20)
3. Rising Stars #6 (Top Cow/Image, No. 26)
4. Avengers Two: Wonder Man and Beast #1 (Marvel, No. 48)
5. Warlands #8 (Image, No. 49)
6. Young Justice: Sins of Youth #1 (DC, No. 50)
7. Young Justice: Sins of Youth #2 (DC, No. 53)
8. Darkminds #2 (Image, No. 67)
9. Star Wars: Chewbacca #3 (Dark Horse, No. 79)
10. Marvel: The Lost Generation #10 (Marvel, No. 81)

LOOKING BACK

What topped the charts FIVE YEARS AGO?

1. Spawn #32 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
2. X-Men #42 (Marvel)
3. Uncanny X-Men #322 (Marvel)
4. X-Men: Prime #1 (Marvel)
5. Wolverine #91 (Marvel)
6. Gen^{13} #2 (Image)
7. Generation X #5 (Marvel)
8. Sovereign Seven #1 (DC)
9. X-Force #44 (Marvel)
10. X-Factor #112 (Marvel)

7-UP Claremont tried the creator-owned route at DC.

Lo, how the tide has turned. Even as Chris Claremont wows fans with his big return to *X-Men*, five years ago Claremont was launching *Sovereign Seven*, a creator-owned property folks had big hopes for, but which petered out after 33 issues. Some fans still like to rag on this one, but to Claremont's credit, his triumphs on *Uncanny X-Men* and *New Mutants* usually outweigh the *Sovereign Seven gripes*.

INTERNET REPORT FOR COMPUTER GEEKS EVERYWHERE! by Lars Pearson

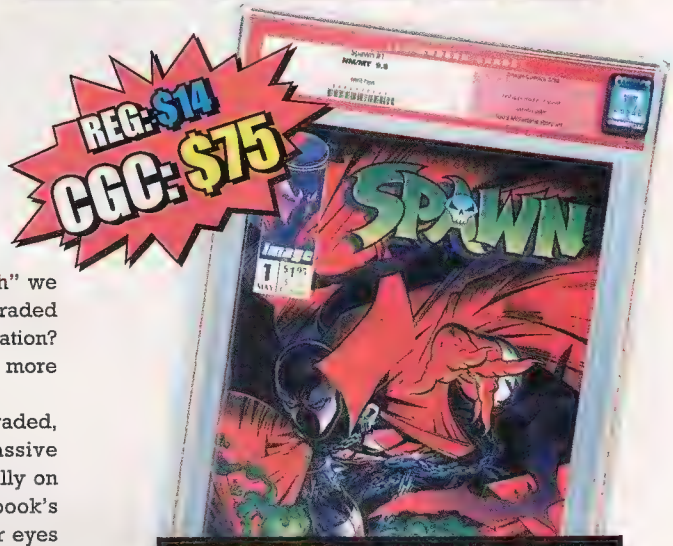
'NET GAINS

SEALED WITH A KISS

CGC books clean up online

Remember how last month in "Market Watch" we told you about comic books independently graded and sealed by the Comics Guarantee Corporation? Well, they're commanding high dollars—and nowhere more so than the Internet.

Thing is, many private collectors get their books graded, but don't sell them. Storefronts don't yet have massive amounts of graded books, so online trading, especially on eBay, remains the No. 1 barometer as to a graded book's value. There are sales going on that would make your eyes bulge like overripe cantaloupes. To read more about graded *Uncanny X-Men* and *Wolverine* comics hitting the roof, check out the "Merch Madness" section below.

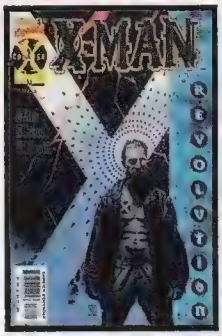


SPAWNING GROUND Image printed 2.7 million copies of *Spawn* #1...but very few can hit a CGC grade of 9.4 or higher. This CGC-graded 9.8 copy of *Spawn* #1 sold for $75 on eBay.

ups & downs

GOING UP

Out-of-print *Marvel Masterworks* shine like the Silver Age, with vol. 21 (reprinting *Fantastic Four*) selling for the wildly inflated price of $360.50. Also, recent "Counter-X" books, such as *X-Man* #63, lit the night at $4 to $5 online.



GOING DOWN

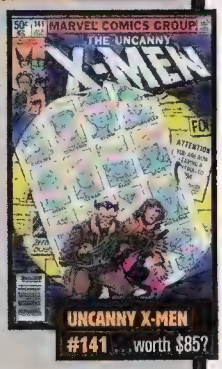
Even as Garth Ennis rocks on *Punisher* and *Preacher*, his work on *Hitman* becomes largely forgotten. An early Tommy M. appearance in *Batman Chronicles* #4 went for $4 online. Also, lower-tier Batman books such as *Catwoman* (regular series) #1 (about $2 online) struggle for recognition.

ASSORTED CRAP REPORT

MERCH MADNESS

GRADED COMICS

To quickly recap, Comics Guarantee Corporation (CGC) is an independent service that will grade comics submitted to them, then seal the books in protective cases with labels to identify their condition. This aids consumers in knowing the true condition of books they are purchasing, and also informs collectors if a book has been restored.



UNCANNY X-MEN #141...worth $85?

However, high-graded books–let's say, anything above a 9 on CGC's 10-point scale–almost instantly sell for a premium. The most significant winner so far? A *Star Wars* (Marvel) #1 variant, with a cover price of 35 cents and a CGC grade of 9.2, sold on eBay for $1,278.26–far above the book's guide price of $550. That's an extreme case, but you can quickly see how high-graded comics

THE GREATEST quotes

"A WORD TO THE WISE, DEVIL...DON'T F--- WITH GOD!"
–*GOD TO THE DEVIL, AFTER KICKING HIS BUTT,* SAVAGE DRAGON *#31*

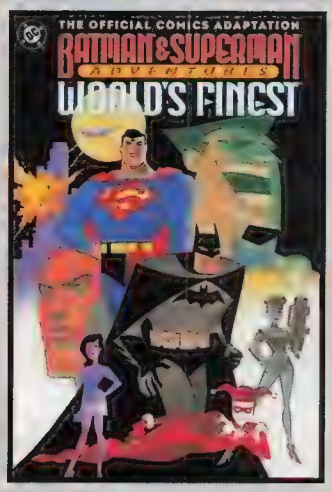
MERCHcont.

boost your collection's value.

Other examples: An *Uncanny X-Men* #141, graded at 9.6, sold on eBay for $85.25–well over its guide value of $32. Likewise, a *Wolverine* (mini-series) #1, graded at 9.4, sold for $58–a good gain on its $35 guide value.

Mark our words: What you're seeing now is nothing compared to what you'll see a year from now. Graded comics will pump the market, and you can either row with the current or against. We suggest you catch the wave.

ORIGINAL ART



A quick lesson about original art: Some titles and properties have fan followings that make a piece sell above the price you'd expect.

For example, the Batman and Superman animated series each have their own staunch followings. Hence, the original cover to *Batman & Superman Adventures: World's Finest* (shown above), by artist Bruce Timm, sold for $1,050–well beyond a normal Batman or Superman cover.

OK, lesson No. 2 about original art: You'll often make money if you watch the headlines for key information. Such is the case with the late, great "Peanuts" creator Charles Schulz. At any given time, you could find some original "Peanuts" art for sale, but Schulz's passing has rocketed demand.

Hence, an original daily strip from 1991, shown below, grabbed $2,200 on eBay. Also, a 1973 strip with Schulz's trademark beagle Snoopy and his sidekick Woodstock took home $4,550. And one of the biggies? A full Sunday cartoon from 1993 nabbed $6,200. Yessir, the headlines often tell you more about the market than a good Ouija Board. ■ LP

MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

HOW TO USE THE PRICE GUIDE

The **WIZARD** guide contains the most accurate and up-to-the-minute comic book prices possible. Keep in mind that the Price Guide is only a guide; prices may vary depending on the local availability and popularity of a title.

IT'S EASY... The price guide is arranged alphabetically by title. Listings for trade paperbacks, annuals, one-shots and graphic novels are found after the regular listing for a title, and are likewise listed alphabetically. When a title has been used several times for different series, like *Legion of Super-Heroes* or even *Fantastic Four*, we list all series under that title chronologically.

You'll notice some book listings have color bars. Red means it's risen in value; blue, fallen in value; green, new issues and/or title listings; and yellow indicates heavy market trading activity, yet no change in value since last issue.

ALPHABETICAL ARRANGEMENT

After skipping articles "A," "An," and "The" at the beginning of a title, alphabetization is word by word, not letter by letter. Ex: "The Amazing Spider-Man" is listed under "Amazing," but "Batman: Sword of Azrael" comes before "Batman: The Animated Movie" because we include the article "The" when it's an interior part of the title. All titles starting with the word "Star," including "Star Wars," come before titles such as "Stardust" and "Starman." Abbreviations such as "Dr." are listed before titles like "Dragon" but after titles starting with "Doctor." Numeric titles such as "2099 A.D." will be mixed in alphabetically as if the numeral were spelled out as "Two thousand ninety-nine."

REFERENCES

SECRET DECODER RING

❶ .....First Appearance of
anniv.....Anniversary issue
A .....Appearance
B .....Begin stories with
C .....Cameo that pre-dates ❶
cvr.....Cover
D .....Death/Destruction of
GN.....Graphic Novel
HC.....Hardcover
IR .....Identity revealed
J .....Joins
L .....Last story with
M.....Married
O .....Origin
p .....part #
PF .....Prestige Format
Q .....Quits
R .....Return of
SC .....Softcover
sz .....Size
TPB.....Trade Paperback
w/ .....With
w/o .....Without

MAKING THE GRADE

All prices listed in this guide are for Near Mint (NM) condition. When your comic isn't Near Mint, you can compute the price based on the percentages shown below. Keep in mind that everyone grades condition differently and many things factor into grading a comic: age, supply and demand for the various grades, retailer location, local availability, current popularity, and its specific condition. It might help if you grade comics on a 10-point scale, with 10 being perfect and 1 being crappy.

MINT (M): An almost perfect 9.8 to 10 on a 10-point scale! To be Mint, a comic must appear like the day it was printed–no nicks, dings or creases. No tears or shreds on corners, colors are crystal clear, cover gloss is still there and the staples are perfect. Many new comics fall short of Mint standards. Mint comics fetch 125-150% of price listed. Comics after 1970 in Mint should be priced at the Near Mint price, since Mint copies are not unusual for comics after 1970.

NEAR MINT (NM): A 9 on a 10-point scale. The book might appear to be Mint, but upon inspection, tiny flaws are seen. The gloss and color are outstanding. **ALL PRICES IN THIS GUIDE ARE FOR NM COPIES, WHICH ARE 100 PERCENT OF GUIDE LISTINGS.**

VERY FINE (VF): A 7 on a scale of 10. At first glance may appear Near Mint, but at closer range, you'll notice minor signs of use. VF comics are 70 percent of guide listings (75-80% for pre-1970 books).

FINE-VERY FINE (FVF): A 6 outta 10. Pages may be slightly yellow, but not brown or brittle in FVF books. Expect several tiny stress lines along the spine or covers and several tiny color flakes are permitted. The spine may have creases and corners may be slightly rounded, but great cover gloss remains. FVF books go for 50 percent of price guide listings.

FINE (FN): A 5 out of 10. Slightly better than average with obvious signs of wear, but still clean and bright without major creasing. Fine books go for 40 percent of price guide listings.

VERY GOOD (VG): A 3 out of 10. Average, at best. VG comics appear used, but not abused. They have creases and minor tears. Very Good books go for 15-25 percent of guide listings.

GOOD (G), FAIR (FR) and POOR (P): All are 1 or less out of 10. These books...suck. Heavily worn, these are the comics that have been re-read a lot. Good books go for 10 percent of price guide listings. Fair books can have loose pages or pieces missing from the cover and sell for 3 percent of listings. Poor books can have missing covers, pages, etc. These books go for 1 percent of listings.

CREATOR ABBREVIATIONS

Abell, Dusty ....DAb
Abnett, Dan ....DAt
Adams, Art ....AAd
Adams, Michael ....MAd
Adams, Neal ....NAd
Adkins, Dan ....DAd
Adlard, Charlie ....CAd
Ahlquist, Mark ....MAq
Alcatena ....ALc
Allred, Laura ....LAl
Allred, Michael ....MAl
Altieri, Kevin ....KAt
Altstaetter, Karl ....KAl
Amaro, Gary ....GAm
Anderson, Brent ....BAn
Anderson, Murphy ....MAn
Andru, Ross ....RAn
Aparo, Jim ....JAp
Aragonés, Sergio ....SAr
Brigman, June ....JBr
Broderick, Pat ....PBr
Broome, John ....JBm
Broome, Mat ....MAt
Brown, Robert ....RBw
Brozowsky, Joe ....JBz
Brunner, Frank ....FBr
Buccellato, Steve ....SBc
Buckingham, Mark ....MBu
Buckler, Rich ....RBu
Buscema, John ....JBu
Buscema, Sal ....SBu
Busiek, Kurt ....KBu
Butler, Jeff ....JBt
Butler, Steve ....SBt
Buzz ....BUz
Byers, Reggie ....RBy
Byrd, Mitch ....MBy
Byrne, John ....JBy
Danner, Paul ....PDn
Darrow, Geof ....GDa
David, Peter ....PDa
Davidson, Craig ....CDa
Davis, Alan ....ADa
Davis, Dan ....DDv
Davis, Malcolm ....MDa
DeFalco, Tom ....TDe
Delgado, Ricardo ....RDe
DeMatteis, J.M. ....JDm
Deodato, Jr., Mike ....MDe
Deodato, Mike ....MDd
DeVries, David ....DDe
Dezago, Todd ....TDg
DeZuniga, Tony ....TDz
Dillon, Steve ....SDn
Dini, Paul ....PDi
Ditko, Steve ....SDi
Dixon, Buzz ....BDi
Dixon, Chuck ....CDi
Dixon, John ....JDi

ARTISTS

Arcudi, John ....JAr
Augustyn, Brian ....BAu
Austin, Terry ....TAu
Ayers, Dick ....DAy
Bachalo, Chris ....CBc
Badger, Mark ....MBd
Bagley, Mark ....MBa
Bair, Michael ....MBi
Baker, Kyle ....KBa
Balent, Jim ....JBl
Banks, Darryl ....DBk
Baron, Mike ....MBo
Barr, Mike W. ....MWb
Barreto, Eduardo ....EBa
Batista, Chris ....CBt
Benefiel, Scott ....SBe
Benes, Ed ....EBe
Benitez, Joe ....JOe
Benjamin, Ryan ....RBn
Bennett, Joe ....JBe
Bennett, Richard ....RBe
Benson, Scott ....SBn
Berkowitz, Stan ....SBk
Bisley, Simon ....SBi
Bissette, Stephen ....SBs
Biukovic, Edwin ....EBi
Blaustein, Adam ....ABl
Blevins, Bret ....BBl
Bogdanove, Jon ....JBg
Bolinger, Kat ....KBo
Bolland, Brian ....BBo
Bolton, John ....JBo
Bond, Phillip ....PBo
Booth, Bret ....BBt
Boring, Wayne ....WBo
Boyd, Robert ....RBo
Breeding, Brett ....BBd
Brereton, Daniel ....DBn
Brevoort, Tom ....TBr
Breyfogle, Norm ....NBr
Bridges, Vic ....VBr
Bridwell, E. Nelson ....EBr
Bright, Mark ....MBr
Cagley, Michael ....MCg
Calafiore, Jim ....JCf
Campbell, Eddie ....ECa
Campbell, J. Scott ....JCp
Campos, Marc ....MCa
Capullo, Greg ....GCp
Caputo, Tony ....TCa
Cardy, Nick ....NCa
Carey, Mike ....MCy
Carlin, Mike ....MCr
Carruthers, Sandy ....SCs
Castellini, Claudio ....CCa
Castrillo, Anthony ....ACa
Cavalieri, Joey ....JCf
Chadwick, Paul ....PCh
Chang, Bernard ....BCh
Charest, Travis ....TCh
Chaykin, Howard ....HCh
Chen, Sean ....SCh
Chiarello, Mark ....MCh
Chichester, Dan ....Ch
Childress, Jan ....JCs
Chiodo, Joe ....JCd
Choi, Brandon ....BCo
Churchill, Ian ....ICh
Cirocco, Frank ....FCi
Claremont, Chris CCl
Cockrum, Dave ....DCo
Colan, Gene ....GCo
Collins, Max ....MCo
Collins, Mike ....MCn
Collins, Nancy A. ....NCo
Collins, Terry ....TCo
Colon, Ernie ....ECo
Conner, Amanda ....ACo
Constanza, Pete ....PCo
Conte, Rob ....RCo
Conway, Gerry ....GCy
Cooper, Dave ....DCp
Crilley, Mark ....MCi
Cruz, Roger ....RCr
Cullins, Paris ....PCu
Daniel, Tony ....TDa
Dodson, Terry ....TDo
Doran, Colleen ....CDo
Dorkin, Evan ....EDo
Dorman, Dave ....DDo
Doucet, Julie ....JDo
Dringenberg, Mike ....MDr
Duffy, Jo ....JDu
Dunn, Ben ....BDn
Dwyer, Kieron ....KDw
Dwyer, Norm ....NDw
Eastman, Kevin ....KEa
Eaton, Scot ....SEa
Edelman, Scott ....SEd
Edginton, Ian ....IEd
Egeland, Marty ....MEg
Eisner, Will ....WEi
Eldred, Tim ....TEl
Ellis, Steven ....SEl
Ellis, Warren ....WEl
Ellison, Harlan ....HEl
Englehart, Steve ....SEn
Ennis, Garth ....GEn
Erskine, Gary ....GEs
Erwin, Steve ....SEr
Estes, John ....JEs
Eury, Michael ....MEu
Evanier, Mark ....MEv
Everett, Bill ....BEv
Ezquerra, Carlos ....CEz
Fabry, Glenn ....GFa
Farmer, Mark ....MFa
Felche, Norman ....NFe
Ferry, Pascual ....PFe
Finch, David ....DFn
Fingeroth, Danny ....DFi
Fisher, Hart D. ....HFi
Fleet, John Van ....JFl
Fleisher, Michael ....MFl
Fleming, Robert ....RFl
Fontenot, Maurice ....MFo
Foster, Ron ....RFo
Fox, Gardner ....GFo
Fox, Greg ....GFx
Fraga, Dan ....DFr
Franchesco ....FRa
Frank, Gary ....GFk
Freeman, George ....GFn
Frenz, Ron ....RFr
Friedman, Michael Jan ....MFr
Friedrich, Mike ....MFh
Fry III, James ....JFr
Fujiwara, Kamui ....KFu
Furman, Simon ....SFu
Gaiman, Neil ....NGa
Gammill, Kerry ....KGu
Garner, Alex ....AGa
Garney, Ron ....RGa
Garzon, Carlos ....CGa
Gascione, Phil ....PGa
Geary, Rick ....RGe
Gecko, Gabe ....GGe
Geiger, Steve ....SGg
Gerard, Ruben ....RGd
Gerber, Steve ....SGe
Gerhard ....GEr
Gianni, Gary ....GGi
Giarrano, Vince ....VGi
Gibbons, Dave ....DGb
Giddings, Noelle ....NGi
Giffen, Keith ....KGi
Gil, Armando ....AGi
Gilbert, Michael T. ....MGi
Gillen, Chas ....CGi
Gillis, Peter ....PGi
Giordano, Dick ....DGi
Glanzman, Sam ....SGl
Gold, Mimi ....MGd
Goldberg, Stan ....SGd
Golden, Michael ....MGo
Gonzaga, Mike ....MGz
Gonzalez, Jorge ....JGn
Goodwin, Archie ....AGn
Gordon, Alan ....AGd
Gosier, Phil ....PGs
Goupil, Steve ....SEe
Grainger, Sam ....SGn
Grant, Alan ....AGr
Grant, Steven ....SGr
Grau, Peter ....PGr
Gray, Mick ....MGy
Green, Randy ....RGr
Grell, Mike ....MGr
Grey ....GRe
Grindberg, Tom ....TGg
Gross, Daerick ....DGr
Gross, Paul ....PGo
Gruenwald, Mark ....MGn
Grummett, Tom ....TGr
Guay, Rebecca ....RGu
Guice, Jackson ....JGu
Guichet, Yvel ....YGu
Guinan, Paul ....PGn
Gulacy, Paul ....PGu
Gustovich, Mike ....MGu
Ha, Gene ....GHa
Haley, Matt ....MHy
Hall, Bob ....BHl
Halsted, Ted ....THl
Hama, Larry ....LHa
Hamm, Sam ....SHa
Hamner, Cully ....CHa
Hampton, Bo ....BHa
Hampton, Scott ....SHm
Haney, Bob ....BHy
Hannigan, Ed ....EHa
Hansen, Marc ....MAh
Hanson, Neil ....NHa
Harmon, Dan ....DHr
Harras, Bob ....BHa
Harris, Jack C. ....JHa
Harris, Mike ....MHa
Harris, N. Steven ....NSh
Harris, Tony ....THa
Harrison, Lou ....LHr
Harrison, Mark ....MHn
Hartnell, Andy ....AHa
Hartsoe, Everette ....EHr
Hawkins, Matt ....MHw
Hayes, Drew ....DHa
Heath, Russ ....RHe
Heck, Don ....DHe
Hedden, Rich ....RHd
Heisler, Mike ....MHs
Helfer, Andrew ....AHe
Hempel, Marc ....MHp
Henry, Flint ....FHy
Hernandez, Gilbert ....GHe
Hernandez, Jaime ....JHr
Hernandez, Michael ....MHe
Herrera, Ben ....BHe
Hester, Philip ....PHe
Hewlet, Jamie ....JHe
Higgin, John ....JHi
Higgins, Michael ....MHi
Hitch, Bryan ....BHi
Hitchcock, Laura ....LHi
Hoberg, Rick ....RHo
Holcomb, Art ....AHo
Holdredge, Jon ....JHo
Hooper, Ken ....KHo
Hoover, Dave ....DHo
Hopgood, Kevin ....KHp
Hotton, Brian ....BHt
Hotz, Kyle ....KHt
Howarth, Matt ....MHo
Howell, Richard ....RHw
Hudnall, James ....JHu
Hughes, Adam ....AHu
Hughes, Steven ....SHu
Immonen, Stuart ....SIm
Isabedra, Oliver ....OLs
Isabella, Tony ....TIs
Isherwood, Geof ....GIs
Ishida, Tatsuya ....TIh
Iverson, Mike ....MIv
Jackson, Scott ....SJa
Jacobs, Will ....WJa
James, Joseph A. ....JJm
Janes, Sheldon ....SJn
Janes, Steve ....SJo
Janke, Dennis ....DJa
Janson, Klaus ....KJa
Jarvinen, Kirk ....KJv
Jenkins, Paul ....PJe
Jennett, Stuart ....SJe
Jensen, Jeff ....JJe
Jimenez, Leonardo ....LJi
Jimenez, Phil ....PJi
Johnson, Dave ....DJo
Johnson, Jeff ....JJo
Johnson, Paul ....PJe
Johnson, Rob ....RJh
Johnson, Stewart ....SJh
Johnson, Ted ....TJh
Jones, Bruce ....BJo
Jones, Gerard ....GJo
Jones, J.B. ....JJn
Jones, Kelley ....KJo
Jones, R.A. ....RJo
Jones, Robert ....RJn
Jurgens, Dan ....DJu
Jusko, Joe ....JJu
Justiniano, José ....JJs
Kaluta, Michael Wm. ....MKl
Kaminski, Len ....LKa
Kane, Bob ....BKa
Kane, Gil ....GKa
Kanigher, Robert ....RKa
Kaniuga, Trent ....TKn
Kanteravich, Mike ....MKa
Kavanagh, Terry ....TKa
Kayanan, Rafael ....RKy
Kazaleh, Mike ....MKz
Kelly, Joe ....JKe
Kennedy, Cam ....CKe
Keown, Dale ....DKe
Kesel, Barbara ....BKe
Kesel, Karl ....KKe
Kieth, Sam ....SKi
Kindierski, Lovern ....LKi
Kirby, Jack ....JKi
Kitson, Barry ....BKi
Klein, Todd ....TKl
Kolins, Scott ....SKi
Korday, Igor ....IKo
Krause, Peter ....PKr
Kristiansen, Teddy H. ....TKr
Kubert, Adam ....AKu
Kubert, Andy ....AKb
Kubert, Joe ....JKu
Kupperberg, Alan ....AKp
Kupperberg, Paul ....PKu
Kwitney, Alisa ....AKw
Kyffin, Tom ....TKy
LaBan, Terry ....TLa
Labat, Yancey ....YLa
Lackey, Mike ....MLc
Laguna, Fabio ....FLa
Laird, Peter ....PLa
Lanning, Andy ....ALa
Lansdale, Joe R. ....JLa
Lapham, David ....DLp
LaQuinta, Robert ....RLa
Lark, Michael ....MLr
LaRocque, Greg ....GLa
Larroca, Sal ....SLr
Larsen, Erik ....ELa
Lash, Batton ....BMa
Lashley, Ken ....KLs
Lasick, Marty ....MLs
Lawlis, Dan ....KLa
Lawrence, Clifford ....CLa
Lawrence, Mike D. ....MLa
Layton, Bob ....BLa
Lee, Pat ....PAl
Lee, Paul ....PAu
Leach, Rick ....RLc
Lee, Elaine ....ELe
Lee, Jae ....JAl
Lee, Jim ....JLe
Lee, Patrick ....PAt
Lee, Scott ....SCl
Lee, Stan ....SLe
Lee, Tom ....TLe
Leeke, Mike ....MLo
Leialoha, Steve ....SLa
Leon, John Paul ....JLn
Leonard, Mike ....MLn
Leonardi, Rick ....RLe
Levins, Rick ....RLv
Levitz, Paul ....PLe
Lieber, Larry ....LLe
Lieber, Steven ....SLb
Liefeld, Rob ....RLd
Lightle, Steve ....SLi
Lim, Ron ....RLi
Lindo, Kirk ....KLn
Linsner, Joseph Michael ....JLi
Lobdell, Scott ....SLo
Locke, Vince ....VLo
Loeb, Jeph ....JLb
Lofficier, R.J.M. ....RLo
López, José Luis Garcia ....JLz
Lopresti, Aaron ....ALp
Loyo, Oscar Gonzalez ....OLo
Luke, Eric ....ELk
Lumley, Ralph ....RLu
Lustbader, Erik ....ELu
Luth, Tom ....TLu
Lyle, Tom ....TLy
Macchio, Ralph ....RMa
Mack, David ....DAv
Mackie, Howard ....HMa
Macon, Darko ....DAr
Madan, Dev ....DVm
Madureira, Joe ....JMd
Maggin, Elliot S. ....EMa
Maguire, Kevin ....KMa
Mahnke, Doug ....DMn
Mahfood, Jim ....JMf
Manabe, Jahji ....JMa
Mandrake, Tom ....TMc
Mangels, Andy ....AMa
Manley, Mike ....MMn
Mann, Roland ....RMn
Manning, Russ ....RMi
Mantlo, Bill ....BMa
Marcos, Pablo ....PMa
Marden, William ....WMr
Marder, Larry ....LAm
Marimon, Bill ....BMn
Mariotte, Jeff ....JMi
Maroto, Esteban ....EMa
Marrs, Lee ....LMr
Martinbrough, Shawn ....SMa
Martinez, Roy Allan ....RMr
Marz, Ron ....RMz
Massengill, Nathan ....NMa
Matsuda, Jeff ....JMs
Matt, Joe ....JMt
Maus, Bill ....BMs
Mayerik, Val ....VMa
Mayhew, Mike ....MMa
Mays, Rick ....RMy
Mazzucchelli, David ....DMa
McAvennie, Mike ....MMc
McCarthy, Brendon ....BMr
McCloud, Scott ....SMl
McCraw, Tom ....TMw
McCrea, John ....JMr
McDaniel, Scott ....SMd
McDaniel, Walter ....WMc
McDonnell, Luke ....LMc
McDuffie, Dwayne ....DMc
McEowan, Patrick ....PMc
McFarlane, Todd ....TMc
McGregor, Don ....DMg
McGuinness, Ed ....EMc
McKean, Dave ....DMk
McKeever, Ted ....TMk
McKenna, Mark ....MCk
McKenzie, Roger ....RMc
McKie, Angus ....AMc
McKone, Mike ....MMk
McLaughlin, Sean ....SMc
McLaurin, Marc ....MMl
McLeod, Bob ....BMc
McMahon, Michael ....MMh
McManus, Shawn ....SMs
Medina, Angel ....AMe
Medley, Linda ....LMe
Mercadoocasio, Harvey ....HMc
Messner-Loebs, William ....WLo
Mhan, Pop ....PMh
Michelinie, David ....DMi
Mignola, Mike ....MMi
Milgrom, Al ....AMi
Millar, Mark ....MMr
Miller, Frank ....FMi
Miller, Mike S. ....MMe
Miller, Steve ....SMi
Milligan, Peter ....PMi
Mireault, Bernie ....BMr
Mishkin, Dan ....DMs
Moder, Lee ....LMd
Moebius ....MOe
Moeller, Christopher ....CMa
Moench, Doug ....DMo
Moldoff, Shelly ....SMo
Monks, Joseph M. ....JMk
Mooney, Jim ....JMo
Moore, Alan ....AMo
Moore, John Francis ....JFm
Moore, Terry ....TMr
Morales, Rags ....RMa
Moretti, Mark ....MMo
Morrison, Grant ....GMo
Morrow, Gray ....GMr
Motter, Dean ....DMt
Mougin, Lou ....LMo
Moy, Jeffrey ....JMy
Murray, Doug ....DMu
Muth, Jon J ....JMu
Mychaels, Marat ....MMy
Nagai, Go ....GNa
Nagayasu, Takumi ....TNg
Naifeh, Ted ....TNa
Napolitano, Nick ....NNa
Napton, Bob ....BNa
Nasser, Mike ....MNa
Nauck, Todd ....TNu
Neary, Paul ....PNe
Nelson ....NEl

& WRITERS

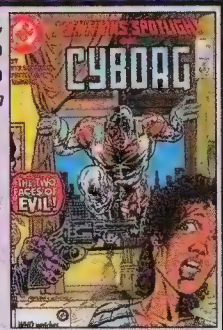
MY FIRST TIME

CREATOR DEBUTS

J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI, writer of *Rising Stars* and soon to write the Joe's Comics imprint at Top Cow, debuted in comics with *Teen Titans Spotlight* #13.

"I paired up Cyborg with Two-Face because they both have that look of the face split down the center. I think it ended up being a real fan favorite, and for the first time–I think–you saw Two-Face having the two internal monologues. As far as I knew that hadn't been done before."

■ CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE



Nelson, Mark A. .....MNl
Netzer, Mike .....MNe
Newell, Mindy .....MNw
Newton, Don .....DNe
Nichols, Art .....ANi
Nicieza, Fabian .....FNi
Nieves, Rafael .....RNi
Nocenti, Ann .....ANo
Nolan, Graham .....GNo
Nord, Cary .....CNr
Novick, Irv .....INo
Novin, Phyllis .....PNo
Nowlan, Kevin .....KNo
Nutman, Philip .....PNu
O'Barr, James .....JOb
O'Connel, Brian .....BOc
O'Connor, Thomas .....TOc
O'Donnell, Peter .....POd
O'Neil, Dennis .....DOn
O'Neil, Kevin .....KOn
Olivetti, Ariel .....AOl
Oliffe, Pat .....POl
One, Dark .....DOe
Ordway, Jerry .....JOr
Orlando, Joe .....JOd
Oshii, Mamoru .....MOs
Ostrander, John .....JOs
Otomo, Katsuhiro .....KOt
Ozkan, Tayyar .....TOz
Pace, Richard .....RPc
Pacella, Mark .....MPc
Pacheco, Carlos .....CPa
Paley, Nina .....NPa
Palmiotti, Jimmy .....JPl
Palmiotti, Peter .....PPa
Pander, Arnold .....APn
Pander, Jacob .....JPn
Paniccia, Mark .....MPn
Parker, Rick .....RPk
Parkhouse, Steve .....SPa
Parobeck, Mike .....MPr
Pascos, James .....JPc
Patterson, Bruce .....BPa
Pearson, Jason .....JPs
Pedi .....PEd
Pekar, Harvey .....HPe
Pelletier, Paul .....PPe
Pendleton, Linda .....LPe
Pennington, Mark .....MPe
Pérez, George .....GPe
Perlin, Don .....DPe
Peterson, Brandon .....BPe
Peterson, Jonathan .....JPo
Petrucha, Stefan .....SPr
Peyer, Tom .....TPe
Phillips, Sean .....SPh
Phipps, Rob .....RPh
Pini, Richard .....RPi
Pini, Wendy .....WPi
Platt, Stephen .....SPt
Pleece, Warren .....WPl
Ploog, Mike .....MPl
Plunkett, Kilian .....KPl
Pollack, Rachel .....RPo
Pollard, Keith .....KPo
Pollina, Adam .....APo
Pope, Paul .....PPo
Porozich, Faye .....FPe
Porter, Howard .....HPo
Portacio, Whilce .....WPo
Post, Jarrod .....JPo
Potter, Doug .....DPo
Potts, Carl .....CPo
Powell, Bob .....BPo
Powell, Martin .....MPo
Premiani, Bruce .....BPr
Priest, Christopher .....CPr
Prosser, Jerry .....JPr
Puckett, Kelley .....KPu
Pugh, Steve .....SPu
Pulido, Brian .....BPu
Purcell, Gordon .....GPu
Pusko, Martin .....MPa
Queen, Randy .....RQu
Quesada, Joe .....JQu
Raab, Ben .....BRb
Ramos, Humberto .....HRa
Randall, Barbara .....BRa
Randall, Ron .....RRu
Raney, Tom .....TRa
Ranson, Arthur .....ARa
Raskin, Jordan .....JRa
Rawson, Dave .....DRa
Raynor, Richard Piers ...RPr
Reeves-Stevens, Judith ...JRv
Renick, Jaxon .....JRn
Richardson, Mike .....MRi
Ricketts, Mark .....MRc
Ridgeway, John .....JRi
Rieber, John Ney .....JRe
Riley, John .....JRl
Rinaldi, Pino .....PRi
Robbins, Frank .....FRo
Robbins, Trina .....TRo
Roberts, Lon .....LRo
Robertson, Darick .....DRb
Robinson, James .....JRb
Rogers, Marshall .....MRo
Roman, Steve .....SRo
Romita, John .....JRo
Romita Jr., John .....JRj
Ross, Alex .....ARo
Ross, Dave .....DRo
Ross, John .....JRs
Ross, Luke .....LRs
Ross, Marshall .....MRs
Roth, Werner .....WRo
Royle, John .....JRy
Rozakis, Bob .....BRo
Rozum, John .....JRz
Rubi, Melvin .....MRu
Rubinstein, Joe .....JRu
Rude, Steve .....SRu
Russell, Craig P. .....PCr
Russell, Vince .....VRu
Ryan, Matt .....MRy
Ryan, Paul .....PRy
Ryder, Tom .....TRy
Sagara, Mike .....MSa
Sakai, Stan .....SSa
Sale, Tim .....TSa
Salick, Roger .....RSa
Saltares, Javier .....JSs
Sanderson, Peter .....PSa
Sant, Wayne Van .....WVa
Saviuk, Alex .....ASa
Schaffenberger, Kurt ...KSc
Schmitz, Mark .....MSm
Schrab, Rob .....RSc
Schultheiss, Matthias ...MSc
Schultz, Mark .....MSh
Scoffield, Sean .....SSc
Seagle, Steven T. .....SSe
Sears, Bart .....BSe
Semeiks, Val .....VSe
Severin, Marie .....MSe
Shanower, Eric .....ESh
Sharp, Liam .....LSh
Shaw, Sean .....SSh
Sherman, James T. .....JSn
Sherman, Jim .....JSr
Shirow, Masamune .....MSr
Shoemaker, Terry .....TSh
Shooter, Jim .....JSh
Sibal, Jonathan .....JSb
Siegel, Jerry .....JSg
Sienkiewicz, Bill .....BSi
Silvestri, Eric .....ESi
Silvestri, Marc .....MSi
Sim, Dave .....DSi
Simon, Joe .....JOi
Simonson, Louise .....LSi
Simonson, Walt .....WSi
Simpson, Don .....DSs
Simpson, Howard .....HSi
Simpson, William .....WSm
Sinnott, Joe .....JSi
Skeates, Steve .....SSk
Skroce, Steve .....SSr
Skrones, Mary .....MSs
Slampyak, Ted .....TSl
Slifer, Roger .....RSl
Slott, Dan .....DSl
Small Jr., Louis .....LSm
Smith, Andy .....ASm
Smith, Beau .....BSt
Smith, Jeff .....JSm
Smith, Paul .....PSm
Smith, Tod .....TSm
Snejbjerg, Peter .....PSn
Sniegoski, Tom .....TSg
Snyder III, John K. .....JSy

All photos by Paul Shciroldi, save Perez photo by Brian Smith.

TOP 10 CREATORS

FAN FAVORITES

These are the creators the fans crave. Creators whose name on a cover sells the book. *Wizard*'s "Top Ten Creators" lists are derived from a nationwide survey. Artists include pencilers and painters.

WRITERS

1. Garth Ennis
Preacher, Punisher

2. Chris Claremont
Uncanny X-Men, X-Men

3. Alan Moore
America's Best Comics

4. Jeph Loeb
Superman, Batman: Dark Victory

5. Warren Ellis
Planetary, Counter-X

6. Peter David
Captain Marvel, SpyBoy

7. J. Michael Straczynski
Rising Stars

8. Fabian Nicieza
Thunderbolts, Gambit

9. Kurt Busiek
Avengers, Astro City

10. Mark Waid
JLA, Gatecrasher

ARTISTS

1. Michael Turner
Fathom

2. George Pérez
Avengers

3. Ed McGuinness
Superman

4. Leinil F. Yu
X-Men

5. Andy Park
Tomb Raider

6. Steve Dillon
Preacher, Punisher

7. Adam Kubert
Uncanny X-Men

8. Mark Bagley
Thunderbolts

9. ChrisCross
Captain Marvel

10. Tim Sale
Batman: Dark Victory

Sparling, Jack .....JSp
Spiegelman, Art .....ASp
Spiegle, Dan .....DSp
Springer, Frank .....FSp
Sprouse, Chris .....CSp
St. Pierre, Joe .....JPi
Starlin, Jim .....JSt
Statema, John .....JSa
Staton, Joe .....JSo
Steacy, Ken .....KSt
Stephenson, Eric .....ESp
Steranko, Jim .....JSe
Stern, Roger .....RSt
Stern, Steve .....SSt
Stevens, Alec .....ASt
Stevens, Dave .....DSt
Strnad, Jan .....JSd
Stone, Chic .....CSt
Stone, Peter .....PSt
Stradley, Randy .....RSr
Strazewski, Len .....LSz
Stroman, Larry .....LSt
Sullivan, Lee .....LSu
Sutton, Tom .....TSu
Swan, Curt .....CSw
Takenaga, Francis .....FTa
Talbot, Bryan .....BTa
Tan, Billy .....BTn
Tanaka, Masashi .....MTk
Tanghal, Romeo .....RTa
Taylor, Mike .....MTa
Taylor, R.G. .....RTl
Templeton, Ty .....TTe
Tenney, Mark .....MTn
Tenney, Tom .....TTn
Texeira, Mark .....MTe
Thibert, Art .....ATh
Thibert, Pamela .....PTh
Thibodeaux, Mike .....MTh
Thomas, Joel .....JTm
Thomas, Roy .....RTh
Thompson, Jill .....JTh
Tidwell, Terry .....TTi
Timm, Bruce .....BTi
Toth, Alex .....ATo
Trimpe, Herb .....HTr
Troug, Chas .....CTr
Truman, Timothy .....TTr
Tucci, Billy .....BTu
Turner, Dwayne .....DTu
Turner, Michael .....MTu
Tuska, George .....GTu
Tuttle, Todd .....TTu
Vachss, Andrew .....AVa
Vado, Dan .....DVa
Valentino, Jim .....JVa
Vance, Cindy .....CVa
Vance, James .....JVn
Vance, Steve .....SVa
VanHook, Kevin .....KVh
Veitch, Rick .....RVe
Veitch, Tom .....TVe
Velez Jr., Ivan .....IVe
Velluto, Sal .....SVe
Verheiden, Mark .....MVe
Vess, Charles .....CVe
Vigil, Tim .....TVi
Villagran, Ricardo .....RVi
Vince, Nick .....NVi
Von Eeden, Trevor .....TEe
Vosburg, Mike .....MVo
Wagner, John .....JWa
Wagner, Matt .....MWa
Wagner, Ron .....RWa
Waid, Mark .....MWd
Waldron, Lamar .....LWa
Walton, Rob .....RWl
Waltrip, Jason .....JWp
Waltrip, John .....JWt
Warner, Chris .....CWa
Warren, Adam .....AWa
Watkiss, John .....JWk
Weaver, Michael .....MWv
Weeks, Lee .....LWk
Wein, Len .....LWe
Weinstein, Howard ...HWe
Weiss, Alan .....AWe
Wenzel, David .....DWe
Wheatley, Mark .....MWh
Whigham, Rod .....RWh
Wiacek, Bob .....BWi
Wieringo, Mike .....MWr
Wildman, Andrew .....AWm
Williams, Anthony .....AWl
Williams, Chris .....CWi
Williams, David .....DWl
Williams, Kent .....KWi
Williamson, Al .....AWi
Willingham, Bill .....BWl
Wilshire, Mary .....MWi
Windsor-Smith, Barry ...BSm
Witten, Brian .....BWt
Woch, Stan .....SWo
Wolf, Chance .....CWl
Wolfe, Joe .....JWf
Wolfman, Marv .....MWo
Wood, Ashley .....AWo
Wood, Teri S. .....TWo
Wood, Wally .....WWo
Worley, Kate .....KWr
Wormer, Kirk Van .....KWo
Wozniak, Chris .....CWo
Wright, Gregory .....GWr
Wrightson, Bernie .....BWr
Wyman, M.C. .....MWy
Yaep, Chap .....CYa
Yale, Kim .....KYa
Yeates, Tom .....TYe
Yeowell, Steve .....SYe
Yu, Leinil Francis .....LYu
Zarate, Oscar .....OZa
Zeck, Mike .....MZe
Zulli, Michael .....MZu

SHOWS & CONS

PLACES TO GO! FREAKS TO SEE!

These listings are as accurate as we can get 'em, but *Wizard* always recommends phoning ahead before you attend an event—show information sometimes changes after we go to press. With that in mind, it's time for all you comic-hungry hordes to go conventioneering!

CALIFORNIA

EVERY WED. & EVERY SAT., CITY OF INDUSTRY

FRANK & SON COLLECTIBLE WAREHOUSE, 19649 E. San Jose Ave. Over 150 dealer tables @ $40 each, FREE admission, FREE parking, Wed: 4pm-9:30pm & Sat: 10am-5pm. This show will feature a wide selection of comics, toys, action figures, Beanie Babies, Hot Wheels, non-sports cards, Star Wars, Star Trek, and much more. For info & directions call Frankie @ 909-444-7955 or 909-444-7956. Visit our Website @ www.fs-collectibles.com.

MAY 21, LOS ANGELES

LOS ANGELES COMIC BOOK & SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION, Shrine Auditorium Expo Center, 700 West 32nd St. $5 admission, 10am-5pm. THE LARGEST AND LONGEST RUNNING MONTHLY CONVENTION ON THE WEST COAST! SPECIAL GUESTS FEATURED EVERY MONTH! A dealer's room full of Golden & Silver age, and new comic books, toys, action figures, movie memorabilia, Star Wars & Star Trek toys, non-sports & sports trading cards, Beanie Babies, Pokemon collectibles, Japanese animation merchandise, Hong Kong movie videos. For more information contact Bruce Schwartz, 2319-A West Olive Ave. Burbank, CA 91506 or call 818-954-8432 or check Website at www.comicbookscifi.com.

MAY 28, SAN JOSE

COLLECTOR QUEST, Santa Clara Marriot in Santa Clara, Great America Pkwy exit 3 miles north of San Jose on the 101 freeway. Over 100 dealer tables, 11am-4pm (9am-11am early bird). Regular admission is $5 for adults, $3 for children (5 and under FREE). Early Bird admission $20. Bring this ad and receive $1 off regular admission or half off early bird for everyone in your party! With over 10,000 square feet, COLLECTOR QUEST is the #1 show in the Bay Area for vintage and current collectibles! Wall to wall comic books (from Golden Age to Present), action figures, cards (sport, non-sport & CCG's), die-cast, Anime, videos, autographs and much more! All attendees receive a free comic book. Free hourly drawings for over $2,000 in giveaways and prizes! For show information, call 831-454-1857. For directions, call 408-988-1500. Dealer information, call 831-471-9375. Visit our Website at http://www.empire-toys.com/shows.html SEE YOU THERE!

CONNECTICUT

MAY 21, EAST HARTFORD

CONNECTICUT COMIC BOOK CONVENTION (CONNECTICON), East Hartford Elks Hall, 148 Roberts St., exit 58 from I-84. 35, 8ft dealer tables @ $45 each, 99 cents admission, 11AM-5PM. NE's longest running all comics show with over 20 years in this location and we're monthly in 1999. Featuring Golden age, Silver age & Modern comics, also non-sports cards, Star Wars items, toys, magazines, pulps and other comic collectibles. Guest artists at most shows. For more information & table reservations contact: Hal Kinney (The Bookie), 206 Burnside Avenue, East Hartford, Connecticut 06108, 860-289-1208 (AFTERNOONS ONLY-EST).

COLORADO

MAY 7, DENVER

MAJESTICON-Rocky Mountain's best Comics, Toys, and Collectibles Convention, Sheraton Tech-Center, 7007 S. Clinton, I-25 and Arapahoe Road (Arapahoe East, Clinton South). $5 adults, $3 twelve and under. 10am-5pm. Guest of Honor: Comics legend Joe Jusko (artist of Vampirella, Tarzan, etc). Plus: Tom Grossman (Modeler's Resource), Jennifer Stimack (Fitness Champion/Pin-up Model), Christie Golden (Science-Fiction/Star Trek Novelist). Drawings/Door Prizes! Dealers and Information call Monte Moore at 303-294-0146.

ILLINOIS

MAY 21, SPRINGFIELD

SPRINGFIELD COMIC CONVENTION, Signature Inn, 3090 Stevenson I-55 @ Stevenson (exit 94). FREE admission! 10AM to 4PM. Mention this ad in Wizard and get a FREE comic with any purchase. Comics new and old, non-sports cards, toys and other cool stuff will be available. For more information or if you want to reserve a dealer's table call Alan @ 309-657-1599.

LOUISIANA

MAY 26-28, NEW ORLEANS

BIG EASY COMIC-CON, Hilton Riverside Hotel, 2 Poydras St., New Orleans. Hours: Friday 1pm to 7pm, Saturday 10am to 6pm, Sunday 11am to 5pm. Celebrity guests include: author, Anne Rice, Alexandra Tydings ("Aphrodite" on Hercules & Xena), Yvonne Craig (TV's "Batgirl") & Playboy Playmate, Lisa Marie Scott. Comics guests: Joe Bennett, Black Bull Entertainment, John Byrne, Joe Casey, Amanda Connor, Crusade Entertainment, Mike Deodato, Scott Lobdell, J.G. Jones, Jimmy Palmiotti, Don Rosa, Roy Thomas, Billy Tucci, Jim Valentino & more! Big dealer's room, panels, programs and CCG Tournaments. Show info, advance ticket sales & discount parking coupons at: www.bigeasycon.com. See our ad in this issue for info on hotel and airfare discounts! Contact: R.A.P. Promotions (419) 526-1427, Weekdays, 9am to 5pm EST. E-mail: BigEasyCon@wfcomics.com.

MARYLAND

MAY 23, LAUREL

COMIC BOOK AND NON SPORTS CARD SHOW presented by Clandestine Comics. Best Western Laurel, 15101 Switzer Lane (exit 33B off I95 on Rt I98). 30 tables @ 55 each, $2.50 admission, children under 7 are FREE, 11am-4pm. Dealers will be buying, selling & trading Golden age comics to the present. Pokemon cards, M:TG, original art, Japanese animation and much more. For dealer information call Fred Edeson @ 410-783-1157 or email at clandestinecomic@hotmail.com.

MICHIGAN

JUNE 11, LIVONIA

X-TRAVA-CON COMIC BOOK, NON-SPORTS CARD AND TOY SHOW, Knights of Columbus Hall, 19801 Farmington Rd. 55 tables @ $40 each in advance, $45 at show, $2 admission, children under six are FREE, 10am-4pm. Four door prizes. We feature comics, non-sports cards, collectible toys, action figures, card games, Beanie Babies, Anime, Pokemon plus much more. For more information contact Motor City Conventions @ 248-426-8059 or visit our Website @ motorcityconventions.com.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

MAY 7, PORTSMOUTH

SEACOAST COLLECTABLE SHOW, Yokens Restaurant Convention Center, 95 North to exit 5, Route 1 south 2 miles. Over 100 dealer tables, $3 admission, children FREE with adults, 9am-3pm. This show will feature a wide selection of new and old comics, cards, non-sport, Beanie Babies, action figures, Star Wars, Star Trek and Magic. For more information and directions contact Chris' Cards and Comics @ 603-474-2283.

NEW JERSEY

MAY 14 & JUNE 11, CLIFTON

CLIFTON COMIC BOOK EXPO, Community Recreation Center, 1232 Main Ave.(Rt. 46 to Piaget Ave. to Main. From NYC the bus stops at the door). 30, 6ft tables @ $45 each, FREE admission! Northern NJ's longest running show! Comics from GA to present! No minimum bid auction @ 11:30. Trivia contest at 1:30 for over $100 in comics! Great dealers! Great deals! Past guests have included major writers and artists. Call JP @ 973-783-0608 for updates or email: pugprdctns@aol.com.

MAY 21, WAYNE

WAYNE COMIC BOOK EXPO, Wayne Holiday Inn, Rt 46 Service Rd. (Off Rt. 23 South near Willowbrook Mall). 30, 8ft tables @ $60 each, $2 admission (kids under six and 2nd parent FREE!), Easy, FREE parking. PUG BUCKS given out

throughout the day as door prizes! Comics from GA to present at great prices! The East Coast's best and friendliest dealers without the NYC hassle! Two no minimum bid auctions! For updates call JP @ 973-783-0608 or email: pugprdctns@aol.com.

MAY 27-28, BORDENTOWN
NEW JERSEY FANS & COLLECTORS, This is the place to be Memorial Day weekend! Centrally located at the Bordentown Armory, Rt. 206, just 1/2 mile North of NJ Turnpike exit 7 and near I-295. 8ft. tables only $60 for both days, $2 admission, 9:30am-3:30pm. This monthly show features a nice selection of comics-Modern, Silver, Gold. Plus Pokemon, Beanies, non-sports and sports cards & more. FREE comics, hourly door prizes, guest artists tba, refreshments, plenty of free parking. For more information call 609-448-7585.

NEW YORK

JUNE 3-4, BUFFALO
NORTH AMERICAN COMIC TOY AND COLLECTIBLES EXPO 2000, PEPSI CENTER, AMHERST, NEW YORK. This world class event location is the site of this spectacular new annual event. Up to 400 tables of fantastic collectibles with a special large area featuring 100 tables of comic dealers. World's finest comic artist guests and other special stars will be appearing. This will be New York State's largest show of its kind in 2000! HEAVY ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN on east coast USA and Canada (Toronto only hour and half away) Dealer space only 75.00, best deal in the universe! See next WIZARD for more details. Send SASE to P.O. BOX 195, CHEEKTOWAGA, NEW YORK 14225 for complete guest list, dealer information and other EXPO INFO!

JUNE 23-25, NEW YORK
NEW YORK COMIC AND FANTASY CREATORS CONVENTIONS, Madison Square Garden. New York City's largest comic and fantasy event gears up for the new millennium. Over 300 booth featuring comics, cards, toys, artwork and more. Special guest include; Adam West and Yvonne Craig (TV's Batman and Batgirl), June Lockhart and Mark Goddard (Lost in Space), Doug Bradley (Hellraiser), Lou Ferrigno (TV's Hulk) and special surprise guests from The World Wrestling Federation. John Romita Jr., Ken Kelly, Jimmy Palmiotti, Amanda Conner, Jim Starlin, Jim Aparo, Louis Small Jr., Manon Kelley, Mark Texiera, Walt and Louise Simonson, Fabian Nicieza, Rich Buckler, Mike DeCarlo and many more. Tickets are available at Ticketmaster (212) 307-7171 or at the Madison Square Garden box office for $15 per day. For table reservation call 516-328-9290. For more info visit our Websites innervisioncomics.com or fearsmag.com.

JULY 8, NEW YORK
THE BIG APPLE COMIC BOOK, ART & TOY SHOW. St. Paul Church Auditorium, 9th Ave & 60th St, NYC. $6 admission, 10am-6pm. Buying, selling and trading Gold, Silver and Modern age comics. Toys, Action figures, non-sports cards, comic art, movie posters, videos, Anime, TV & movie memorabilia and more. Special guests TBA. For information call 718-326-2713 or visit our Website www.ba2k.net or bigappleconn@earthlink.net.

NORTH CAROLINA

JUNE 16-18, CHARLOTTE
HEROES CONVENTION 2000, Charlotte Convention Center, 501 South College Street in Uptown Charlotte. Friday 11am - 7pm, Saturday 10am - 6pm, Sunday 11am - 6pm. $10 Daily Admission, $20 Three-Day Pass, Kids 10 and under FREE, Father's Day specials for Dad! Host Hotel is Hilton Charlotte & Towers located right across the street from the center at 222 South College Street. The HeroesCon special rate is $95, call Hilton Hotels @ 1-800-HILTONS or 704-377-1500 for reservations. Tons of Freebies like Comic Books, Posters, Cards & Stuff! Attending Professional artists include: HeroesCon favorite son--George Perez and tons of today's top creators including John Beatty, Richard Case, Todd Dezago, Steve Epting, Randy Green, Matt Hawkins, Adam Hughes, Joe Quesada (tent), Brian Stelfreeze, Karl Story, Tim Townsend, Bill Tucci (tent), Michael Turner (tent) & Mike Wieringo; Golden & Silver Age greats Nick Cardy, Dick Giordano, Irwin Hasen, Carmine Infantino, Julius Schwartz and Roy Thomas. Plus literally hundreds more to be announced. Join us in celebrating "Julie" Schwartz's 85th birthday, along with many of the creators that joined him in starting the Silver Age of Comics! Attending publishers include: DC Comics, Decipher, Diamond, Top Cow & More! Magic the Gathering, Pokemon, Star Wars, Young Jedi, Star Trek, Legend of the Five Rings, Warhammer & Warhammer 40K, Warzone tournaments & more. Quick-Draw art contests, portfolio reviews by professionals, panel discussions and workshops, charity auction and of course, thousands of Gold, Silver & Modern Age Comic Books, CCG's, Toys, Cards and collectibles to add to your collection! Be part of America's Favorite Comic Show! 200 Booths available starting @ $500. Sponsored by Heroes Aren't Hard To Find, PO Box 9181, Charlotte, NC 28299 Contact: H. Shelton Drum @ 704-375-7463. Fax 704-375-7464 e-mail shelton@heroesonline.com or visit us on the web: www.heroesonline.com

OHIO

JUNE 4, CLEVELAND
CLEVELAND COMIC CONVENTION, Knights Party Center (K of C Hall), 29101 Euclid Ave (1/2 mile East of I-90 & exit 186). 30, 8ft dealer tables @ $50 each, $2 admission, children 6 and under FREE, 10am-4pm. Hourly door prizes, FREE comic to first 25 customers. 1,000s of Golden, Silver & Modern age comics, non-sport cards, Pokemon items, sci-fi merchandise, action figures. For more information call Jeff Harper Productions @ 330-499-6056 or email: jeffharpro@aol.com

OKLAHOMA

MAY 13, TULSA
TULSA'S SECOND ANNUAL COMIC BOOK AND TOY SHOW, Holiday Inn, 2600 N. Aspen, Broken Arrow, OK. Tables $50 each, $1 admission. For more information call 918-269-3089 or write to P.O. Box 1021, Jenks, OK 74037.

PENNSYLVANIA

MAY 28, PHILADELPHIA
PHILADELPHIA COMIC-CON, Holiday Inn, 10th Street and Packer Avenue, exit 46 off I-76 or exit 15 off I-95 (follow signs to Packer). From NJ: take Walt Whitman bridge to second exit after toll plaza (exit 46). 48 tables are 1/$65 or 2/$120, 10 AM to 4 PM. Philadelphia's longest running all-comic show is also the best value as you get in for only $3 ($2 when you mention WIZARD), plus FREE parking! Besides comics from the 1940's to this week, our dealers (from 6 states) also will be selling, buying and trading non-sports cards, Japanimation videos, Pokemon and other related collectibles. Great giveaways every hour including $100 in show cash given away throughout the day good for any merchandise at the show! Our very special guest artist this month is JOSEPH M. LINSNER. The creative genius behind Dawn and Cry For Dawn. More guests to be announced so visit your local comic shop for a flyer or call our hotline the weekend of the show for the latest update. Contact Derek Woywood of Collectors Comics at (856)782-0817.

VIRGINIA

JUNE 4, MCLEAN/VIENNA (WASHINGTON D.C. AREA)
CAPITAL ASSOCIATES MONTHLY COMIC, TOY & CCG SHOW, NEW location: Tysons Corner Holiday Inn, 1960 Chain Bridge Rd. Directions: Take exit 11 South (Route 123) off I-495, 1/4 mile, hotel is on right. For further directions call @ 703-893-2100. 80 vendor tables: 1st table @ $85, 2nd table @ $80, 3rd+ @ $75, $2 admission, children under 5 FREE, FREE parking, 10am-4pm. Buy, Sell, Trade: Gold, Silver & new comics, independents, Anime, CCG, toys, POKEMON, Star Wars, Buffy, posters, t-shirts, original artwork, non-sports cards, etc. Guests: Call. Jeff Rocen @ 703-912-1993, http://members.aol.com/comicshow & comicshow@aol.com.

ATTENTION!

If you'd like to use *Wizard*'s magic to help advertise your comic book event or retail location, call Karen Evora at (914) 268-3907 or email kevora@wizardworld.com before the 10th of each month. Remember we do not list comic book pricing or 900#.

misc.

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miscellaneous

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–Jack

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C.B.I.Q.

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART...

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

Seeing as how this is the Greatest Issue Ever, we thought we'd dedicate this month's C.B.I.Q. to the greatest minds in comics. Guys like Reed Richards. Hank Pym. Lex Luthor. They've all had some fantastic achievements in their lives. But rather than pat these glory-hounds on the back, we're going to concentrate on the greatest goofups these guys ever garnered! And heck, we'll even rate you against history's dumbest blonde jokes—the lamer the joke, the higher your score!

SCORE	RANK
0	*Why do blondes have TGIF on their shoes? Toes go in first.*
1-4	*What did the blonde name her pet zebra? Spot.*
5-8	*Why do blondes hate M&Ms? They're too hard to peel.*
9	*How do blonde brain cells die? Alone.*

1 Which supervillain created the super-sticky Adhesive X, only to accidentally get it poured on his head while he was wearing a mask, forever bonding it to his face?

A) The Red Skull
B) Baron Zemo
C) Armim Zola
D) Mushmouth from the Cosby Kids

2 How did Reed Richards once defeat a trio of Skrulls?

A) Teleported them into the Negative Zone, where the sudden change in air pressure popped 'em like grapes, causing an intergalactic war with the Skrull homeworld
B) Hypnotized 'em and turned them into cows, where they remained for years, until the townsfolk drank the Skrull cows' milk and gained shapeshifting abilities
C) Distracted them with robotic counterparts of the FF long enough for the Invisible Woman to sneak up on them and zap them with a body-freezing ray, resulting in mutated Skrulls
D) Gave them to Galactus as an enema, setting in motion Marvel's dreaded "Fecal Wars" crossover

3 When Tony Stark's armor designs were stolen and sold to the wrong side of the law, Iron Man tried stopping anyone (good or bad) from using his technology, accidentally resulting in Titanium Man's death. Who stole the designs?

A) Justin Hammer
B) Obadiah Stane
C) Spymaster
D) Bill Gates

4 Metropolis' smartest man, Lex Luthor, proved what an egghead he was by:

A) Rocketing the *Daily Planet* building into orbit just so he could test Superman's powers.
B) Creating a suit of armor to take down Doomsday, only to have it short circuit in battle and actually give the villain *more* power.
C) Wearing a Kryptonite ring on his hand until the ring poisoned Luthor, crippling his hand and eventually killing him.
D) Shavin' his head smooth as a baby's bottom–c'mon, chicks dig bald guys.

5 Brainiac 5.1 may be the smartest guy in the 30th century, but he almost inadvertently destroyed Legion HQ when he:

A) Hooked up circuitry from the evil super-computer Computo into the Legion system to help a sick friend.
B) Accidentally hooked the teleporters up to the food replicators.
C) Forgot to turn on the force field during a meteor storm.
D) Dropped his iMac in the bathtub.

6 Dr. Doom's body was destroyed after he gave which villain massive cosmic energies, eventually resulting in a huge explosion?

A) Annihilus
B) Tyros
C) The Puppet Master
D) John Tesh

7 Besides fighting crime as the Blue Beetle, what was Ted Kord's greatest accomplishment in the JLA?

A) Leading the team
B) Defeating Darkseid
C) Serving as the JLA chauffeur
D) Growing a great, big beer gut overnight

8 After Doc Samson split Bruce Banner and the Hulk into two beings, what did Banner do?

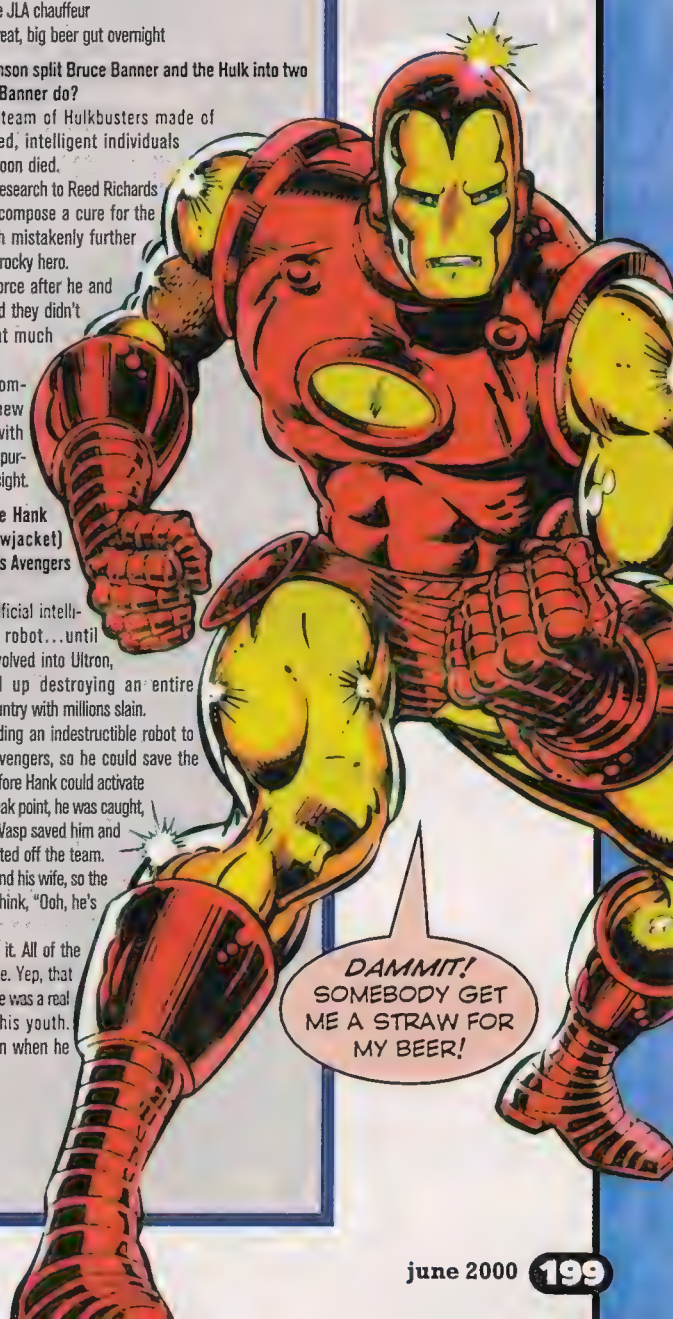
A) Led a new team of Hulkbusters made of highly skilled, intelligent individuals ...who all soon died.
B) Brought his research to Reed Richards and helped compose a cure for the Thing, which mistakenly further mutated the rocky hero.
C) Filed for divorce after he and Betty realized they didn't have all that much in common.
D) Bought a completely new wardrobe, with nary a pair of purple pants in sight.

9 Ol' crazy horse Hank Pym (a.k.a. Yellowjacket) tried impressing his Avengers teammates by:

A) Creating artificial intelligence in a robot...until that robot evolved into Ultron, who wound up destroying an entire European country with millions slain.
B) Secretly sending an indestructible robot to defeat the Avengers, so he could save the day...but before Hank could activate the robot's weak point, he was caught, his wife the Wasp saved him and Hank got booted off the team.
C) Slapping around his wife, so the team would think, "Ooh, he's so macho!"
D) ...Oh, forget it. All of the above are true. Yep, that Hank Pym sure was a real brainiac in his youth. Any takers on when he snaps next?

ANSWERS

Candy-asses can peek on page 206 if this is too tough...



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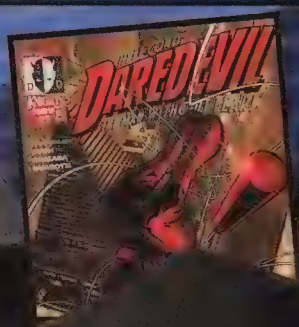

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X-MEN THE MOVIE

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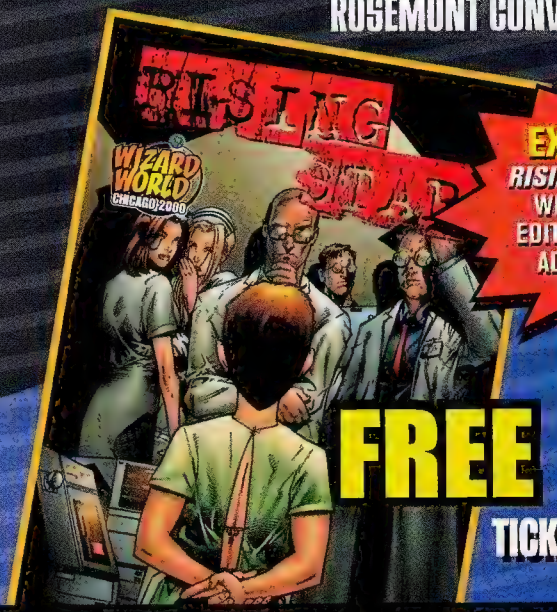

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KEVIN SMITH AND RAY PARK PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHRALLIS. GUEST LIST SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

BULLPEN LOOK BEHIND THE CURTAIN

DRESSED TO KILL

Sometimes good guys do win in the end.

Take Staff Writer Chris Lawrence. Up in Toronto for an "X-Men" movie set visit (and an excuse to put as much beer on the company card as he can), Chris decided to trade his normal casual wear for something a bit more formal. Decked out in brown blazer and loud X-Men tie (based on Jim Lee's *X-Men* #1 cover), Chris ran the gauntlet of hecklers. Clearly overdressed for the occasion, our fearless staff writer took the countless "nice...snicker...tie" and "you've never been to a set visit before, have ya?" comments in stride.

The real moment of truth, however, came when Chris' belittling tour brought him to Rogue herself, Oscar-winning actress Anna Paquin. Impressed with his threads, Ms. Paquin began...uh...fondling Chris' attire, proclaiming "I really like your tie," and then anxiously searched for Rogue on it. After finding the white-streaked mutant on Chris' tie, the actress gave him his due props, "Oh, there she is. Okay, you're cool."

Score one for Mr. Blackwell's best dressed list!

PAQUIN PHOTO COURTESY OF SHOOTING STAR. LAWRENCE PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIGALLA

TOP 10

Top 10 Stan Lee Media Projects after the Backstreet Boys Comic

1. Boyz II X-Men
2. Christina Aguilera Team-Up
3. Justice League Britney
4. New Kids on the Skrull Homeworld
5. The Jacksons at the Center of the Earth.
6. Rom, Space Partridge
7. 'N Sync in the Lost Galaxy
8. Vault of Hanson
9. Ricky Martin and Twitch
10. Mighty Morphin' Menudo Rangers

C.B.I.Q. answers...

1. B 2. B 3. C 4. C 5. A 6. B 7. C 8. A 9. D

COMING RIGHT UP

A SNEAK PEEK

SUMMER PREVIEW-ARAMA

Spawn #100! The end of *Preacher*! Alex Ross' latest! *Wizard* gives you the skinny on the hot summer events in our sizzling summer preview.

NEXT MONTH IN WIZARD #106

WITCHBLADE TV

Yancy Butler IS Witchblade and we have your exclusive visit to the set of the TNT pilot!

X-TREME X-MEN

With just one more issue to go until our "X-Men" Movie countdown ends, we bring you more behind-the-scenes tidbits on comics' most-anticipated movie.

HOT STUFF

You and Alley Bagget out on the town? Not a hoax! Not an imaginary story! Win this contest and it'll become reality!

WIZARD #106

On sale May 31 in comic shops. On sale June 13 everywhere.

ONE OF THE DAMNED

Cheryl Raymundo
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

WHY WE PAY HER "I handle payroll, process contracts, make travel arrangements, keep everyone at all four magazines (*Wizard, InQuest, ToyFare* and *"In" Power*) organized, schedule meetings, keep attendance and process data. Funny, but I sound just like a resume."

BEST OUT-OF-CONTEXT QUOTE "Did you ever just want to bite the head or suck it to the gum?" (in reference to the lollipop in her mouth.)

MOST BIZARRE *WIZARD* MOMENT "Being part of the latest inter-office scavenger hunt, when [Specials Editor] Doug [Goldstein] stripped down to his undies and we had to take Polaroids."

GOLD GLOVES "When I was 14, I punched out the daughter of the superintendent of our school. I got off with a day of detention, probably because I was vice president of my class."

EMMITT JR. "People in school called me Emmitt because in Powder Puff football, I would try to tackle the other players, even though it was flag football."

BEER BARON "I am the funnel queen of SUNY Oswego. I don't drink all that much, but love to do funnels."

FRIGHT NIGHT "One Halloween, a few of us stole this vampire dummy off someone's front yard. We threw it in the street, and it looked just like a dead body! We went back five minutes later and it was gone. That was pretty creepy."

MARIO PARTY "I'm a big video game freak, but the best game of all time is *Super Mario III* for the original Nintendo. One semester, that's all I did was play that game. And I never warped ahead, cuz that's for pansies!"

PYM PARTICLES "In fifth grade, I was five feet tall, the tallest kid in my class. In 12th grade, I was five feet tall, the shortest kid in my class. Go figure."

JAILBAIT "When I was younger, I always ran from the cops. Once, I got pulled over with a bunch of kids, and the cop singled me out. I got real snotty with him, and the next day he showed up at school to talk to my teachers. What a jerk!"

TOY BIZ "I was such a tomboy growing up. I hated Barbie. I loved playing with G.I. Joes, and Crossbows & Catapults was THE best game. I built the best towers ever."

LOLLIPOP GUILD "I do a couple of funny voices, but one of the best is the Munchkins from 'Wizard of Oz.' I sound just like them."

SQUARED CIRCLE "I loved wrestling. I used to watch it all the time. My brother would make me cry all the time by slapping the figure four leg lock on me!"

PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHINDLER

TAKING A WIZ

OTHER MAGAZINES AVAILABLE FROM THE WACKY WIZARD WAREHOUSE

TOYFARE #35

It's sushi time, as *ToyFare* gives you the lowdown on this year's Tokyo Toy Fair show! Plus, learn how to get your paws on those super-hard-to-find action figures, and spend a day in the life of the Thing. No, really!

On sale May 10 in comic shops.
On sale May 23 everywhere.

"IN" POWER #3

Get the complete rundown on this summer's hottest movies–everything from "Pokémon 2" to "Rocky and Bullwinkle" to the "X-Men"! Also, catch up with Britney Spears and her new album, and see why Nickelodeon's "The Wild Thornberries" is the hottest cartoon around!

On sale May 17 in comic shops.
On sale May 30 everywhere.

INQUEST GAMER

INQUEST GAMER #62

It's the all Top Secret issue, as *InQuest Gamer* blows the lid off this summer/fall's hottest games like *Magic: The Gathering–Prophecy, Dungeons and Dragons 3rd Edition* and *Balder's Gate II*!

On sale May 3 in comic shops.
On sale May 16 everywhere.

THE HOTSEAT

This Month Featuring: PETER DAVID

WIZARD: Since you're writing *SpyBoy*, did you have to do a lot of research on espionage?

DAVID: *SpyBoy's* a lot like what I did as a kid. I'd go around the neighborhood with my James Bond attaché case thinking I was a spy. I watched a lot of people through windows.

Ever see anything good?

Not really, but a lot of people waved at me. [*Laughs*] My spying was crimped.

Who was your favorite Bond?

Ah, it had to be [Sean] Connery, with **Pierce Brosnan** as a close second.

Really? I'd go with Roger Moore...

[*Silence*]

Never mind...so, you were an Army brat, right?

I was born in an Army hospital in Fort Mead, Md., but my father was already out. I do like to say I was circumcised by a marksman using a high-powered rifle and a sniper scope.

That's gotta sting.

It was all for practice.

Speaking of your early years...why do you have two first names?

Steve Allen said to never trust anyone with two first names.

He would know.

We're all over the place here.

Got that right. So, how's it feel to work on a hero like Captain Marvel? I mean, he's got the strength of Hercules, the wisdom of Solomon, the...

Wrong Captain Marvel.

Oops...moving on. You wrote the *Little Mermaid* comic...

Yeah, I told the editor I'd break his legs if I didn't get to write it.

You must really love Ariel...did you ever try to do a crossover with her and *Aquaman*?

There was a talking crab supporting character in *Aquaman*. That's as close as I came.

What's your favorite show on TV?

I love **"Buffy,"** "Xena" and "The Sopranos," but my favorite is "The Practice."

Yeah, that Dylan McDermott is dreamy!

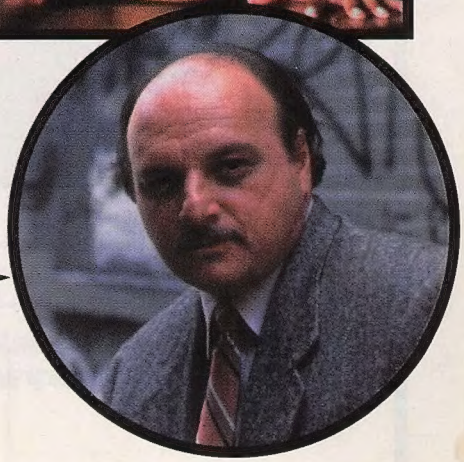
I've never really thought about the dreaminess of Dylan McDermott to be honest...what was I thinking?

If you were on that show, who would play you?

It would have to be **Dennis Franz...** I could share publicity photos with that guy.

Y'know, he's dreamy too.

[*Dead silence*] ■ **MIKE COTTON**



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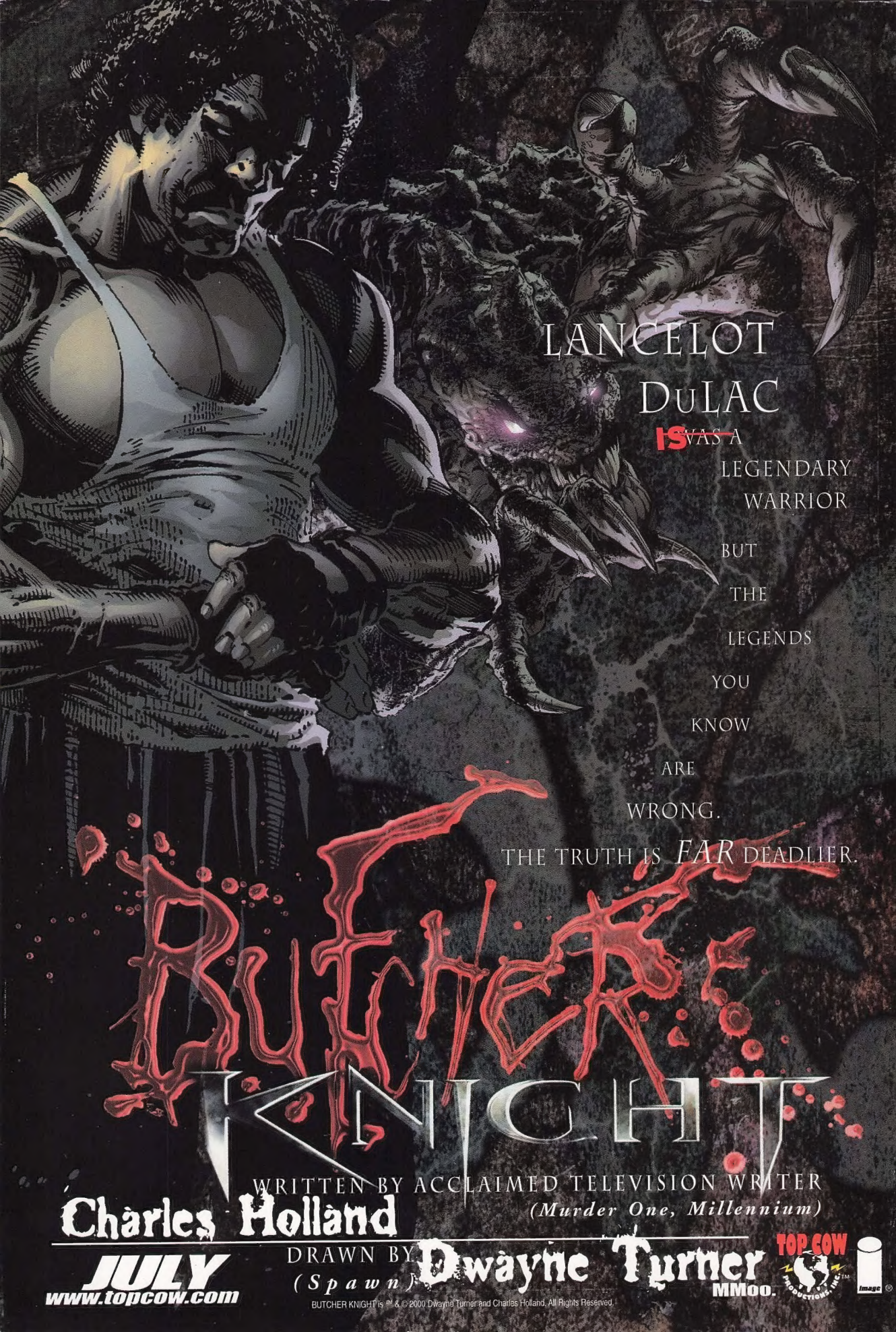
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